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# HUNGARIAN STUDIES

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*Volume 19*  
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Hungarian Chair Symposium, April 2–3, 2005, Bloomington:

"Creativity, Mind, and Brain in Hungarian Scholarship: Past and Present"

*E. Sylvester Vizi*: Science and Conscience

*Ferenc Kiefer*: On the Information Structure of the Hungarian Sentence

*Denis Sinor*: The Establishment of Hungarian Studies at Indiana University.

A Personal Memoir

# HUNGARIAN STUDIES

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(Nemzetközi Magyaráságtudományi Társaság)

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The journal intends to fill a long-felt need in the coverage of Hungarian studies by offering an independent, international forum for original papers of high scholarly standards within all disciplines of the humanities and social sciences (literary history, philology, ethnology, folklore, musicology, art history, philosophy, history, sociology, etc.) pertaining to any aspects of the Hungarian past or present.

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## *Editorial address*

H-1067 Budapest, Teréz körút 13. II/205–207. Telephone/Fax: (36-1) 321-4407  
Mailing address: H-1250 Budapest, P.O. Box 34, E-mail: [hstudies@iti.mta.hu](mailto:hstudies@iti.mta.hu)  
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DIAN, Viktória

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JOHN-STEINER, Vera

JOLESZ, Ferenc A.

KIEFER, Ferenc

MISKA, John

PALLÓ, Gábor

SINOR, Denis

SZEGEDY-MASZÁK, Mihály

VIZI, E. Sylvester

Ecole doctorale de littérature comparée de  
Paris IV, France, et ELTE-Budapest, Hongrie  
Department of Comparative Literature,  
Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, Hungary  
Institut für Kunstgeschichte, Ungarische  
Akademie der Wissenschaften, Budapest,  
Ungarn

University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, USA

Harvard Medical School, Boston, MA, USA

Research Institute for Linguistics, Hungarian

Academy of Sciences, Budapest, Hungary

Szigeti Magyarság, Victoria, B.C., Canada

Institute for Philosophical Research,

Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Budapest,  
Hungary

Indiana University, Bloomington, IN, USA

Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, Hungary

Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Budapest,  
Hungary



# SCIENCE AND CONSCIENCE

E. SYLVESTER VIZI

Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Budapest  
Hungary

Science is central to the cultural heritage of humankind. It is a meritocratic, fact-based activity in which the quality and value of scientific investigations are alone important. In mediaeval Latin the word used for *knowledge* was *scientia*. The English word *science* came from this word. During the Middle Ages any well-educated person could have almost all available knowledge. For example, Copernicus (1473–1543) mastered all of the scientific knowledge of his time – law, mathematics, and medicine, as well as his favourite discipline, astronomy. Since then science has won the recognition and respect of many societies. In the twentieth century the rate of scientific progress has surpassed that of any other time in history and has grown exponentially. Science has changed our lives; it has changed the world. It has become very specialized: modern scientific disciplines include specialty knowledge possessed only by experts. Science has also become aristocratic: while there are more scientists than ever before, more and more scientific knowledge is incomprehensible to non-specialists and to the public.

Intellectuals generally agree that science and technology are necessary for the functioning of modern society. As a consequence, the European Union is trying to build a “knowledge-based” society in which scientific developments are strongly encouraged. Europe must do this if she wants to keep pace with the United States and Japan. However, the public, cynical of these pursuits, frequently questions spending even limited resources on seemingly obscure basic science. The public would prefer to use established technologies to help people who are suffering now, rather than investing in uncertain new science for the future. Why, people ask, should we invest in research on space, when its benefits, if any, will not be immediately available? Why should we explore the human genome? Misunderstanding the role of science in technological development provokes these questions. Many people do not understand that “Science is exploratory – it must venture beyond current knowledge” (Sharp, *The New York Times*, 1993) while it contributes only incrementally to our present understanding. Taxpayers often do not notice that our everyday lives are overwhelmingly dominated by techniques and instru-

ments discovered and developed by scientists, e.g., electricity, radio, telephone, synthetic materials, fax, television, computers, jet planes, satellites, antibiotics, just to name a few. Perhaps if it were made clear how our lifestyles today depend on the scientific advances of yesterday, there would be less opposition to investment in basic science today for the societies of tomorrow.

For example, two generations ago the number one cause of death was infection. In 1928, the discovery of penicillin led to the development of antibiotics. Today this treatment is so effective that bacterial infection is no longer a top killer. However, people do not always appreciate how science has in this way improved the human condition. They do not give science credit for preventing deaths due to bacterial infections only because they fail to realize that things had ever been different; they are not aware of how often previously healthy children of yesteryear died suddenly and tragically from the same bacterial infections that modern science has eliminated as a cause of death. In this way and others science and technology have increasingly become integral parts of our everyday lives. They make life easier for virtually everyone. They allow us to feel that the world is small, permit us to travel 10,000 kilometers in a day, or make it possible to send messages within milliseconds. Almost 2500 years ago it took several hours for a long-distance runner to carry the news of the victory of the Greeks over the Persians from Marathon to Athens. The distance was forty-two kilometers. The new world created by science has established closer links between global events. Because of technology the world has shrunk. Television has made us the best-informed society ever, even though the possible threats to cultural diversity that it has created might be cause for concern.

Despite the many positive effects of science and technology, we should not forget that the products of science are not always so bright and shiny. Science deserves not only credit for the good, but also some blame for the bad. The partial disappearance of the ozone layer, pollution, erosion of biodiversity, toxic and nuclear wastes, the bombing of Hiroshima, Congenital babies, water pollution with pesticides, the catastrophe at Chernobyl, as well as other unfortunate developments, have also, in one way or another, been products of science. I have not even mentioned the role of science in spiritual pollution, and in the increasing gap between rich and poor nations, between rich and poor people. Considering these facts, some questioning of the role of science in modern society might be justified. The public is entitled to voice their feelings of futility and frustration. It is only logical that the public should want to know more about the possible outcomes of the work of scientists, particularly the results of work done at taxpayers' expense. A serious attack on science has come from Vaclav Havel, president of the Czech Republic. *"Traditional science, with its usual coolness, can describe the different ways in which we might destroy ourselves, but it cannot offer us truly effective and practical instructions on how to avert them..."* (The New York Times, 1992). Even

a United States Congressman, George E. Brown, has echoed Havel's opinion that science deserves some of the blame for the dangers that threaten civilization (Hilts, *The New York Times*, 1993).

Despite these objections, we should not forget that many of the negative effects of science have been politically motivated. The building of the atomic bomb was essentially technology, or applied science, a gigantic engineering feat based on scientific principles. Also, the decision to build the hydrogen bomb was political, not scientific. American politicians were led to ask physicists to develop weapons of mass destruction by the war against Hitler. Leo Szilárd, a Hungarian refugee, was the first to raise his voice against the atomic bomb. Physicists have been instrumental in providing bridges between the two great powers of the cold war. The success of the Pugwash Meetings initiated in the 1950s was very important in keeping the world at peace. Robert Oppenheimer was right in saying: "*The scientist is not responsible for the laws of nature, but it is the scientist's job to find out how these laws operate. However, it is not the scientist's responsibility to determine whether a hydrogen bomb should be used.*" Therefore, the contributions of science to the world need no apology. On the contrary, discoveries made by scientists about the nature of the universe in which we live are among civilization's greatest achievements. Exploring how our brain works and decoding the human genome are some of the most noble and ambitious endeavors of humankind.

The field of genetics has made the public especially interested in learning about the activities of laboratory science. Apprehension and fear of irreversibly altering nature, of creating a monster or a superman through genetic engineering, are increasingly on people's minds. No doubt, these possibilities are no longer merely in the realm of science fiction. A "made-to-order" human being might soon not be just a fantasy, but a reality. If the DNA of now extinct human species, like *Homo Erectus* or *Habilis*, could be copied or reproduced, analogous to the events depicted in Spielberg's film "Jurassic Park" for dinosaurs, new individuals with the genetic make-ups of otherwise extinct lines could be created. The public fears that genetics experiments will pave the way to Huxley's *Brave New World*, a world in which natural selection is replaced by planned, technologically assisted human breeding. These fears should persuade society and the public to monitor and control genetics experiments. As a consequence, there is no doubt that we need guidelines to direct scientific investigations. In addition, scientists should be encouraged to obey their consciences as well as to follow the official rules. We must not allow the emergence of another Adolf Hitler, a man who advocates his own version of eugenics, used without limitation, with the intention of creating an "Übermensch." To prevent such a disaster, stringent restrictions on eugenics have been enforced in most European countries, including Hungary.

### The Ethical Issues of Science

If we accept that during the next century, more than ever before, the world will be shaped by science, if we believe that science and technology have become integral parts of our daily lives, if we think that science has an enormous social value, if we know that science and its opportunities are able to change the world for the better, and if we know, and we do know, that science and its products are also capable of shaping the world for the worse, then scientists must acknowledge the need for ethical guidelines directing their activities. However, many scientists have had no formal training in the ethics that should guide them in the handling of sensitive scientific and ethical topics. Academic research into the ethics of science is crucial for securing a bright future. It is equally important to emphasize the weighty ethical responsibilities of scientists to the very scientists involved in research. Scientists have long said that they uphold special standards of honesty and integrity. Nevertheless, this claim has been undermined in recent years by one celebrated misconduct case after the other (e.g., the Baltimore case; the charge against Dr. Gallo, co-discoverer of the H.I.V. virus). We also know that falsifying data or stealing the work of others is not as rare as some might hope (Hilts, *The New York Times*, 1993). These are serious ethical problems that can often discredit the activity of scientists and underline the need for formal ethical training.

There remains the question of what type of ethical training to provide for scientists. One possibility would be to teach the prescriptions of the Bible, a book that our Judeo-Christian culture generally accepts as a guide to ethical practice. The guide focuses on the relationship of people to one another and to the world in which they live. However, many of the ethical problems in science are outside of the scope of situations described in the Bible. Therefore, additional resources must be created that discuss what is ethical in extra-biblical situations. First of all, the activity of scientists should protect and promote the interests of humankind and ensure the dominance of good over evil. Of primary importance is precisely what nobody had believed before August 6, 1945 when the atomic bomb, a product of science, destroyed Hiroshima: humankind has the ability to destroy itself. Scientists need to learn that their activities might have consequences that are not always good for humankind. The atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima taught us that issues of science are also issues of conscience.

Scientists of today and of tomorrow must have the freedom to study what they want; and they must have the right to publish what they have discovered and what they believe to be true. But they also must be obliged to do science in the interests of humankind and its environment, thus ensuring the dominance of good over evil. The responsibility of the scientist is increasingly important in this era of vastly improved communication and greater public scientific awareness and interest.

The public's ambivalence and occasional hostility to science might spring in part from the impression that science is opposed to religion or ethics. Saint Thomas Aquinas, a student of Albertus Magnus, was the first to attempt to reconcile faith with reason. He knew that the world was real, and that it demanded understanding. The thirteenth century in which he lived was an age of prosperity and technological progress, when a primitive agricultural economy was changing into a mercantile, urban society. Martin Luther, the founder of Protestantism, was also successful in paving a path between God and man, between faith and reason. Just as the great European thinkers of the Middle Ages gave the world the methods of science, today scientists have the duty of educating people in understanding the secrets of life. If scientists fail at this task, humankind will not feel safe, and many of those standing at the crossroads between faith and reason, lacking the support of knowledge, will go in the direction of faith and the anti-science feeling of the public will be further increased. Scientists of today should continue paving the road between faith and reason: they should make the "miracles" of the world more understandable. They must share their secrets with society if they expect society to continue supporting them.

What would people, who are skeptical about science, who make a hotchpotch between science and the misuse of science, have said to Michael Faraday? He was asked by his society to improve lighthouses, but it was his individual curiosity that drove his fundamental research into electricity. These skeptical people should be asked to imagine a world without electricity or antibiotics. Furthermore, in the history of science there are bitter examples of what happens to a society that does not support basic science. *Jean-Pierre Charles Revol* (CERN, Switzerland) mentioned, for instance, that the Arabian culture of pre-medieval times brought to Europe vast knowledge in such fields as medicine, mathematics, and astronomy, but for various reasons its spirit of inquiry died and consequently modern Arab society has become greatly impoverished.

### Summary

We are now entering into the third millenium. If we can convince the scientific community that knowledge requires moral responsibility, then we will be better able to convince the public of the value of science. If parliaments and lawmakers terminate the improper use of scientific discoveries, then the light of the natural intellect will not be seen as an intruder into the realm of a mystical communion between God and man, between faith and reason. Only if interventions are made will we have the right to expect the world to be more understanding, more tolerant of science, of knowledge, and of one another.

T. S. Eliot, the famous English-American poet, was right in asking:

“Where is the life we have lost in living,  
Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge,  
Where is the knowledge we have lost in information?”  
(T. S. Eliot, *Choruses from The Rock*)

The proper answer is that we have to live our lives with human dignity in the next century, in the era of telecommunication, nanotechnology, and biotechnology, and we have to put our knowledge into practice with wisdom. Therefore, ethics will be more important in the next century than ever before.

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# COLLABORATIONS OF HUNGARIAN MATHEMATICIANS

VERA JOHN-STEINER

University of New Mexico, Albuquerque  
USA

This paper focuses on the collaborative partnerships of Hungarian mathematicians in the first half of the twentieth century. They were pioneers in collaboration, an intellectual practice that has become widespread during the last fifty years. Hungarian mathematicians starting with the Bolyais, father and son, worked closely together in co-constructing new knowledge and in supporting each other in developing innovative approaches to mathematics. In the literature Paul Erdős' extraordinary range of jointly authored papers is celebrated by the use of the "Erdős Numbers". This paper discusses different patterns of collaboration and uses as illustration the partnerships of von Neumann and Morgenstern; and Pólya and Szegő. These collaborative partners developed interesting working methods including using different languages for conversation and for writing. Their accounts of their shared activities include key aspects of collaboration including mentorship, complementary skills, domains of expertise, the role of chance versus purpose, and the power of shared vision.

**Keywords:** mathematical discovery, intellectual partnerships, collaborative patterns, Hungarian mathematicians, mutual support

There is good reason to believe that Hungarian mathematicians were early practitioners of collaborative activities during periods when joint endeavors were less widespread than they are now. I will give a few examples of partnerships in this discussion as it illustrates, in my opinion, one of the many strengths of the achievements of Hungarians both within and outside the country. I am building on work started with Reuben Hersh, and summarized in our article, "A Visit to Hungarian Mathematics". In addition, I am relying on analyses of partnerships drawn from my book *Creative Collaboration*.

If you mention collaboration to a mathematician, you are most likely to be told of the Erdős Numbers. These refer to a network representing joint papers authored by colleagues in the field who have, if they received the number 1, written a paper with Erdős. Anyone receiving the number 2 has written a paper with someone who has been awarded the number 1. The network is large and complex; and it includes some people outside of mathematics as well. For instance, Einstein was given the



number 2, as he wrote a paper with Ernst Straus, who had written a paper with Erdős. The extraordinary range of close cooperation and jointly authored papers by Pál Erdős is legendary. It reflects his personality and his unceasing passion for his field.

The complexity and frequency of intellectual collaborations have increased rapidly during the last two centuries. This increase is illustrated by the fact that shared Nobel prizes were the norm by the end of the twentieth century, while during the early part of the century solo prizes dominated the field.<sup>1</sup>

One way to define collaboration is that it is the interdependence of thinkers in the co-construction of knowledge, but even when one uses a particular definition, the actual phenomena that such a definition refers to are quite diverse. Thus, it is helpful to distinguish between different patterns of creative partnerships.

One such pattern is *intergenerational* collaboration, which occurs in different contexts including the home, the university and the workplace. In the history of Hungarian mathematics a very interesting example of collaboration across generations is that of Farkas and János Bolyai, father and son. They both addressed issues leading to the development of non-Euclidean geometry, a discovery that had profound mathematical and philosophical implications and which many decades after its original development was used by Einstein in his theory of general relativity.

The story starts in Göttingen, Germany where the elder Bolyai was a student and a close friend of Carl Friedrich Gauss, one of the great mathematicians of the nineteenth century. The two men remained intimate during their entire lives. They shared ideas about the challenge posed by Euclid's parallel axioms. In 1799 Gauss wrote to Farkas Bolyai about his efforts to try to prove this axiom, and bemoaned his difficulty in doing so. Bolyai, the elder, also worked on this problem while he taught mathematics for 47 years at Maros-Vásárhely. We now know that direct attempts to prove this axiom are not demonstrable. Bolyai wrote in his autobiography: "I was obsessed with this problem to the point where it robbed me of my rest, [and] deprived me of my tranquility" (Halsted, xi).

János Bolyai was a gifted child who studied mathematics with his father. His mastery was very rapid, and he pushed his father to present him with increasingly difficult material. At age fifteen he went to study engineering in Vienna. Subsequently, he entered the military, and while posted as a captain at Temesvár, he continued to work on the problems that had preoccupied his father and Gauss. The result was the *Appendix*, a brilliant treatise that stated the basic concepts of non-Euclidean geometry. In presenting this work to his father, who originally warned him against devoting himself to this topic, he expressed his sense of gratitude and closeness to the elder Bolyai, "in certain regards I consider you as a second self" (Halsted, xxviii). His father was eager to have these results published rapidly and he attached them to his own major work, the *Tentamen*. He also added

some of his own reflections and a comparison of Bolyai János' work with that of Lobatchevsky, who also developed what he called "imaginary geometry", and in which his ideas were basically the same as that of Bolyai. Lastly, Gauss responded to Bolyai's work by agreeing to its validity because they corresponded to some of his own, unpublished work.

The foundation of non-Euclidian geometry provides many examples of collaboration, including the sharing of ideas between János Bolyai and his friend Károly Szász. Of greatest interest to this discussion is the way in which father and son demonstrated a deep intellectual and emotional interdependence, starting with János Bolyai learning mathematics from his father. They shared their disappointments and their triumphs with each other, and at a crucial time, the elder Bolyai provided the venue of publication that his son needed.

In the literature of creativity, the development of non-Euclidean geometry is referred to as an example of simultaneous discoveries; that is as an idea that occurs independently to different people at the same time. But the mathematician Morris Kline challenges this interpretation and suggests that there was a kind of thought community between Gauss, Bolyai and the Russian mathematician Lobatchevsky. These three men were linked through the friendship of the elder Bolyai and Gauss, as well as between Lobatchevsky's teacher, Johann Bartels, and Gauss. These mathematicians shared their concerns about Euclid's fifth postulate, which could not be derived from his other postulates. This realization lead Gauss, János Bolyai, and Lobatchevsky to the development of alternatives to the parallel axioms and the foundation of non-Euclidean geometry (Kline, 1972, 878). Gauss was reluctant to publish his own results as he disliked the contentiousness of public debate. In my view, this important episode in mathematical history illustrates the dynamics of discovery, which require both social facilitation and individual originality.

Another form of collaboration is that of *complementarity* which I have defined in the past as consisting of a division of labor based on complementary expertise (including disciplinary knowledge), roles, and temperament. In sustained collaborations such complementarity can result in mutual appropriation, a process in which participants make their own some of their partners' ways of thinking, their specialized expertise and problem solving strategies. John von Neumann, a graduate of the Lutheran gymnasium of Budapest and a winner of the Eötvös prize, was one of the twentieth century's greatest mathematicians. His work ranged from pure mathematics to quantum theory; it included automata theory (critical to computers), axiomatics, and game theory. One of his most interesting collaborations was with the economist Oskar Morgenstern, who described their work together after von Neumann's untimely death (Morgenstern in *Journal of Economic Literature*). Both men published on the topic of games before they started to work together; von Neumann's paper on the theory of games appeared in 1928 and

Morgenstern's first book, which also appeared in 1928, contained some ideas concerning decision making.

The two collaborators met at Princeton University in 1939 and quickly discovered that they shared some interests in common. Morgenstern did not have systematic training in mathematics, but he had studied widely, and was ready to undertake the challenge of mastering some of the concepts in von Neumann's 1928 paper on game theory. The latter was ready to help, and found that discussions with his new Austrian friend were leading him to return to his dormant interests in economics. At first, Morgenstern was going to write a solo paper "showing economists the essence and significance of game theory as it then existed" (Morgenstern, 808). But as he proceeded, von Neumann became increasingly interested in the paper's progress. At one point, he offered to write a joint paper. Morgenstern realized that this was an extraordinary opportunity, and in his description of the beginnings of their collaboration, he refers to this event as "his gift from Heaven". As their work progressed it became a larger and larger treatise. From an article it evolved into a pamphlet and eventually a book. Once they obtained a contract from Princeton University, they no longer worried about the length of the manuscript.

Their practice was to engage in long discussions in German while walking, but once they sat down to write, their text was produced in English. They wrote together. At times, the handwriting changed from one to the other several times on the same page, revealing the extent to which their thinking blended together. They developed the concepts of strategies in two-person and  $n$ -person games, a notion first identified in Morgenstern's book, and applied with great success in von Neumann's mathematical Minimax Theorem (Von Neumann, 1944).

In his account of their collaborative work Morgenstern mentions an incident "that shows how chance can influence the direction of scientific work". One day, while working on von Neumann's minimax theorem, Morgenstern took a walk. It was a cold day, and as he was close to the Institute for Advanced Study library, he stepped inside in order to warm up. He picked up a book edited by the French mathematician Borel. He found within that volume a paper by Jean Ville, who presented the minimax theory in mathematically simpler terms than von Neumann. The two used this formulation to advance their own work, and to introduce "the method of convex bodies into economical theory."

I found this incident of interest as the role of chance in scientific discovery is a contemporary topic in the literature of creativity. Keith Simonton has recently published a book in which he places chance as the most important explanatory variable in scientific creativity (2004). He would undoubtedly find Morgenstern's description as support for his theory. I see a somewhat different explanation. In long projects, there are rhythms of clear focus on a topic, and then there are periods when thinkers need an alternative strategy, that of expansion. This incident il-

illustrates the second of these phases. While Morgenstern interprets his picking up Borel's volume as a chance event, this may not be the case entirely. Borel preceded von Neumann in proposing analyses of games of strategy. His treatment was not as formally developed as those of von Neumann in his 1928 paper, but he was in the same general field as the co-authors of the *Theory of Games and Economic Behavior*. His edited volume had to be of interest to Morgenstern. It is in recognizing the value of Ville's approach (which appeared in the Borel volume) as productive and innovative that Morgenstern revealed his readiness to incorporate new material in their treatment. Chance, curiosity, an openness of mind, and judgment all operated together in this simplification and extension of their theory.

The early presentation of their ideas did not resonate immediately with economists. However, the authors were convinced that the role of elegant, formal mathematics in economics was the way of the future, and that their game theory was an important model leading in that direction. When they wrote in their introduction that, "We shall find it necessary to draw upon techniques of mathematics which have not been used heretofore in mathematical economics, and it is quite possible that further study may result in the future in the creation of new mathematical disciplines" (5), they foretold actual developments. Their theory of games and utility were enormously influential and led to new directions in both economics and mathematics.

The way in which these two men worked together represents a mixture of complementary collaboration – the joining of two disciplines – as well as aspects of *integrative collaboration*. "These partnerships require a prolonged period of committed activity. They thrive on dialogue, risk taking, and a shared vision" (John-Steiner, 2000, 203). In the case of von Neumann and Morgenstern, it was their belief in the applicability of formal mathematical models to economics that revealed their shared vision. They also worked so closely together that they switched back and forth in their writing. We have referred to such a pattern as "braided roles." Morgenstern recalled that their collaboration was the most intensive intellectual activity of his life, and he further commented: "We did an enormous amount of work in a very short time, but it was unceasing pleasure and never a time of drudgery" (815). And finally, this partnership has one more feature of integrative collaborations. It is a transformative co-construction: *The Theory of Games and Economic Behavior* has had an enormous impact in the social sciences, and as mentioned above, it gave rise to important new developments in mathematics. In this way it is an illustration of the most intense and consequential form of intellectual collaboration.

In general, intensive collaborations last one decade or less. A notable exception is the partnership of György Pólya and Gábor Szegő. Their lives spanned much of the twentieth century; and their friendship started when Szegő (who was a few years younger than Pólya) was a student of mathematics in Budapest. They met in

1913 when Pólya returned to Hungary while studying abroad. They discussed a conjecture of Pólya's (based on a conjecture about Fourier coefficients) that became the basis of Szegő's dissertation and first publication. Pólya described this "fruitful cooperation" as one in which mathematical theorems emerge through steps. First, there is a productive guess, which is usually followed by lengthy work during which the proof is found. In this case there was a division of labor between these two mathematicians. Pólya provided the conjecture and Szegő worked out the details and found the proof (Alexanderson, 2000).

Subsequently, they co-authored a very influential book on *Problems and Theorems in Analysis* (German edition 1925). The novelty of this book was that the problems were not classified according to topics, but according to the method of solution. As the authors described it in their preface,

This book is no mere collection of problems. Its most important feature is its systematic arrangement of material, which aims to stimulate the reader to independent work and to suggest to him useful lines of thought. ... Above all we aim to promote in the reader a correct attitude, a certain discipline of thought, which would appear to be even of more essential importance in mathematics than in other scientific disciplines (56).

This innovation was the beginning of Pólya's life-long interest in problem-solving heuristics. His book, *How to Solve It*, first appeared in 1945. It was based on this theme and sold over a million copies over the years and was translated into seventeen languages. His contributions influenced the teaching of mathematics (see the 1980 Yearbook of the National Council of Teachers in Mathematics, who rely upon Pólya's approach). Pólya's rules of discovery thinking had a lasting impact both inside and outside of mathematics.

Of their shared work, Pólya wrote,

It was a wonderful time; we worked with enthusiasm and concentration. We had similar backgrounds. Like all young Hungarian mathematicians of that time, we were both influenced by Lipót Fejér. We were both readers of the same well-directed Hungarian Mathematical Journal for high school students that stressed problem solving. We were interested in the same kinds of questions, in the same topics; but one of us knew more about one topic, and the other more about some other topic. It was a fine collaboration. The book *Aufgaben und Lehrsätze aus der Analysis*, the result of our cooperation, is my best work and also the best work of Gábor Szegő (Nevai, 1995, 682).

And when asked by an interviewer about this collaboration, Pólya added one more thought: "We completed each other, and that through books and papers, and over many, many years" (Alexanderson, 1985, 250).

This description of their partnership touches on many qualities of creative collaborations. The notion of completion is perhaps the most striking remark from a psychological perspective. It echoes the words of the Russian literary critic, Bakhtin, who wrote; “I cannot do without the other; I cannot become myself without the other; I must find myself in the other, finding the other in me” (as quoted in Wertsch, 1998, 116). One way to think of individual development is that each of us is a subset of human possibilities that are realized in particular cultural and historical circumstances. In a partnership one is stretched intellectually and emotionally as participants appropriate the consequences of their shared experiences. Such a process includes expansion by complementarity, and it creates a safety zone within which both support and constructive criticism are practiced.

In “Our Visit to Hungarian Mathematics” we asked the question: “What is so special about Hungarian mathematics?” Our answer echoed that of Pólya and others who emphasized the role of the high school mathematical journal *A Közepiskolai Matematikai Lapok*, the excellent quality of mathematics teaching in some of Hungary’s gymnasias and universities, the appeal of a domain of intellectual achievement that requires limited funds in a poor country, and the impact of the Eötvös competition, which many of the mathematicians described in this paper won. To this list I would like to add the facilitating role of collaboration, which resulted in many transformative works, and which among mathematicians carries the imprint of Erdős Pál, whose publications are in excess of 1500 papers, and whose collaborators numbered, according to some estimates, more than 450 individuals.

This paper has focused on mathematicians whose fame was established in the first half of the twentieth century, and whose work has remained influential to this day. I see them as pioneers in an intellectual practice, which has become widespread in the last fifty years. The quality of these partnerships supports the belief that “collaboration thrives on diversity of perspectives and on constructive dialogues between individuals negotiating their differences while creating their shared voice and vision” (John-Steiner, 6).

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> In physics, with a similar trend in chemistry, the general trend has been from single winners in the early part of the century to two to three physicists sharing the prize in the latter decades. (Source: <http://www.slac.stanford.edu/library/nobel/> and [http://userpage.chemie.fu-berlin.de/diverse/bib/nobel\\_chemie\\_e.html/](http://userpage.chemie.fu-berlin.de/diverse/bib/nobel_chemie_e.html/).)

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# SCIENTIFIC CREATIVITY IN HUNGARIAN CONTEXT

GÁBOR PALLÓ

Institute for Philosophical Research,  
Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Budapest  
Hungary

Comparing with the population, many Hungarians achieved outstanding success in natural sciences in the 20th century. From this fact, the conclusion can be drawn that Hungarians are very creative. In analyzing this conclusion, a simple general model of creativity is used which distinguishes between the approaches of the genius theory and Zeitgeist theory. By applying the Zeitgeist theory, the paper concludes that some elements of the Hungarian culture significantly contributed to the success of the Hungarian scientists, although all of them left Hungary at a certain point of their career. Migration was a key element of their success because they could find relevant problems and meritocratic scientific community in the scientific centers.

**Keywords:** scientific creativity, scientific migration, Hungarian Nobel Prize Winners

Creativity for Hungarians often appears to be a consolation for the political and economical miseries that have occurred from time to time since the early twentieth century. After the general collapse caused by Hungary's defeat in the First World War led to a great loss of territory and population Count Kuno Klébelsberg, Minister of Education in the 1920s, based his policy on the "cultural superiority" of Hungary. He aimed at building up a new system of education, science and culture that would provide possibilities for the emergence of Hungarian "genius", which was assumed to be the most important asset the country had after its severe losses. Cultural superiority, this policy supposed, could help to regain the traditional authority of the country within the region.

Similar argumentation appeared around the mid 1980s. Hungary's economic conditions and the future of the Soviet style socialist system became uncertain, resulting in a kind of frustrated and pessimistic feeling in the citizens about the country's future chances under the changing international circumstances. Socialism had no future, industry looked like industrial museums, and agriculture could not compete with its Western counterparts. Hungary had no mines, no seas, no oil wells, no diamonds, nor any particularly valuable natural resources. Politicians

could only rely on one natural resource: the human factor. Their logic was the following: Hungary had produced many extremely successful intellectuals, including Nobel Laureates, wonderful musicians and businesspeople. This appeared to show that Hungarian life was fertile when it came to producing gifted people. An article published in *Nature* by a non-Hungarian author enhanced this feeling. In an important scientific journal one could read that scientists from Budapest had made the whole twentieth century.<sup>1</sup> In the modern age knowledge has become more important than any natural resource, and scientific knowledge is assumed to be applicable to practical problems. Therefore, one can conclude that the bright future of a country lays in the hands, or heads, of gifted people, primarily scientists.

In addition, the Nobel Prize winners, or musicians, such as Béla Bartók, George Solti or businesspeople, such as George Soros and many others were assumed to be so successful because of their unique way of thought and originality. A similar idea was also expressed by the brilliant nineteenth-century mathematician János Bolyai, who invented non-Euclidean geometry: "I created a new, different world from nothing". Hungary really needed a new, different world.

The importance of creativity in Hungarian life may explain the historic fact that quite a few Hungarian thinkers contributed significantly to the research field of creativity. Although Arthur Koestler, George Polya, Michael Polanyi, Imre Lakatos or Mihály Csikszentmihályi worked out different approaches, their theories have been cited as most relevant contributions.<sup>2</sup>

Precisely because of its importance in 2000 a group of scholars in Hungary launched a research project aiming at mapping and interpreting the supposed Hungarian creativity as it developed during the last two centuries, analyzing its characters and sources. The research (resulted in a series of books) extended to many different fields of intellectual life, including science.<sup>3</sup> Scientific creativity will be analyzed here as it was manifested in the Hungarian context. First, the problem will be precisely defined. This will be followed by a general model for scientific creativity. Finally, this model will be applied to the case of successful Hungarian scientists.

### **The Hungarian Phenomenon**

The idea that through its population Hungary has a special natural resource relies, largely, on the relatively high number of very successful Hungarian scientists. According to this argument, the per capita number of the Hungarian Nobel Prize winners is very high. However, even this number is disputed. *Table 1* shows some basic data on the Nobel Prize winners.

**Table 1**  
Hungarian Nobel Laureates

Name	Dates	Field	Places of activity	Nobel Prize
George von Békésy	1899–1972, Budapest	physics, physiology	Hungary, Sweden, USA	1961 medicine
Dennis Gabor	1900–1979 Budapest	engineering, physics	Germany, Hungary, UK	1971 physics
John Harsanyi	1920–Budapest	economy, pharmacy, mathematics	Hungary, Australia, USA	1994 economy
George de Hevesy	1885–1966 Budapest	chemistry, physics, biochemistry	Hungary, Germany, Denmark, Sweden	1943 chemistry
Philipp Lenard	1862–1947 Pozsony (Bratislava)	chemistry, physics	Germany	1905 physics
George Oláh	1927– Budapest	chemistry	Hungary, Canada, USA	1994 chemistry
Albert Szent-Györgyi	1893–1986 Budapest	medicine, biochemistry	Netherlands, UK, Hungary, USA	1937 medicine
Eugene Wigner	1902–1995 Budapest	chemistry, engineering, physics	Hungary, Germany, USA	1963 physics

**Table 2**  
Hungarian Origin Nobel Prize Winners

Name	Dates	Field	Sites of living	Nobel Prize
Robert Barany	1876–1936	medicine	Austria, Sweden	1914 medicine
Richard Zsigmondy	1865–1929	chemistry	Austria, Germany	1925 chemistry
Milton Friedman	1912–	economy	USA	1976 economy
Carleton Gajdusek	1923–	biology	USA	1976 medicine
John C. Polanyi	1929–	chemistry	Germany, UK, Canada	1986 chemistry
Avram Hershko	1937–	biochemistry	Israel	2004 chemistry

Many authors, however, add other names to this list based on the origin of some Nobel Prize winners (*Table 2*).

The difference in the list of names is explained by the incongruity of the definition of being Hungarian used by the various authors.<sup>4</sup> I use a somewhat loose definition based on the socialization process. Accordingly, I consider a scientist Hungarian, if he was socialized in Hungary, grew up in Hungarian language and culture, received his basic education, social skills, taste, basic human networks and the like in Hungary. The people shown on the second list do not meet these requirements as they were born and educated outside Hungary.

On the other hand, some additional scientists reached a similar level of respect or gained the same high esteem as the Nobel Prize winners although for some reason they never received the prize. Harriet Zuckerman calls them “uncrowned kings”.<sup>5</sup> We can list many Hungarian scientists pertaining to this category but the best known of them are shown in *Table 3*.

**Table 3**  
Some Uncrowned Kings

Name	Dates	Field	Places of working
Theodor von Kármán	1881–1963 Budapest	mechanical engineer, physicist, mathematician	Budapest, Germany, USA
John von Neumann	1903–1957 Budapest	chemist, mathematician, physicist	Germany, USA
Michael Polanyi	1891–1976 Budapest	medical doctor, chemist, philosopher	Budapest, Germany, UK
Leo Szilard	1898–1964 Budapest	engineer, physicist, biologist	Germany, UK, USA
Edward Teller	1909– Budapest	chemist, physicist	Germany, UK, USA

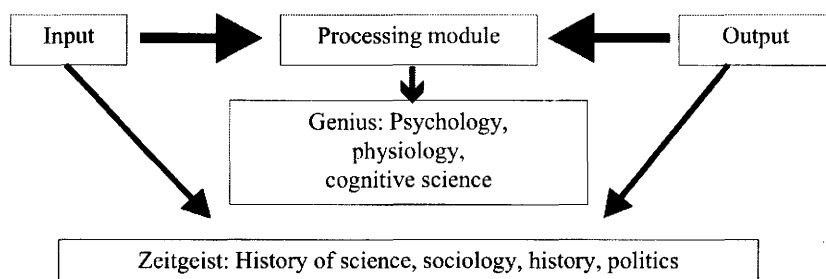
Many other names could be mentioned, including mathematicians who were successful for a long period, such as Paul Erdős, George Polya, Gábor Szegő, Paul Halmos, Peter Lax, Cornelius Lanczos and some mathematicians who remained in Hungary, such as Lipót Fejér, Frigyes Riesz, Béla Szőkefalvy-Nagy, Pál Turán, Alfréd Rényi, and others. Nevertheless, my goal here is not to prove that many excellent Hungarian scientists worked in various fields of natural sciences in the twentieth century, rather to analyze the sources of their success.

The impressive length of the list could serve as an argument for the existence of a special scientific gift. However, the fact that, except some mathematicians, all of the listed Hungarian scientists left Hungary and became successful outside the country makes the case more complicated.<sup>6</sup> The relatively large number of impor-

tant scientists who left the country can be considered as a particular Hungarian phenomenon in the twentieth-century history of science.

### Models of Creativity

Scientific creativity can be interpreted by a simple input-output model as shown in *Figure 1*. Some kind of processing module (brain, intellect, mystic illumination, or whatever, depending on the approaches) converts input information into output information, which is considered as a scientific result.



*Figure 1.* Creativity model

Based on this simple model, two kinds of theories can be distinguished. The first, the genius theory, looks at the mechanism of scientific creation from the point of view of the processing module. This theory supposes that a scientific result is the creation of a wonderful mind, and creativity is a feature of individuals with particular innate abilities working in a strange, mysterious way. The genius approach, the most popular one even today, was vividly expressed around the late 19th, early 20th century by the followers of Francis Galton or Cesare Lombroso.<sup>7</sup> The potential of the exceptional genius minds can supposedly be measured by some psychological tests, as, among many others, Paul Torrance did, who in his popular methods distinguished creativity from intelligence.<sup>8</sup> Robert Sternberg studied the factors influencing the individual's creativity in the fields of science and technology.<sup>9</sup> The psychometric investigations find components of the individual creativity, such as the work of intelligence, lateral and divergent thinking and the like.<sup>10</sup> The genius theory relies on biological, psychological or cognitive arguments.

The second kind of theory, called Zeitgeist theory, explains creativity rather by the input and output knowledge than by the work of the processing module, although accepting the role of individual abilities as a precondition. Robert Merton,

sociologist showed that a large number of scientific results were born simultaneously and many were anticipated. From these facts he concluded that the problems of science at a given period and the accumulated knowledge at its premises, the *Zeitgeist*, had decisive impact on scientific creativity.<sup>11</sup> Dean Keith Simonton, while systematically investigating the impact of *Zeitgeist*,<sup>12</sup> applied the logic of evolution psychology. He held that the scientific views are selected and screened by a complex mechanism resulting in the survival of some ideas and death of others.<sup>13</sup> Mihály Csikszentmihályi apparently accepts the evolutionary *Zeitgeist* approach but he does not limit his studies to the relationship between the individual and his results. Csikszentmihályi focuses on the process of screening. He shows the selection mechanism, the complex influencing factors in many fields of human activity, including science.<sup>14</sup>

Following the logic of Merton, Simonton and Csikszentmihályi, a sociological approach to scientific creativity can be worked out. In spite of the genius theory and not denying the large differences existing in the creative potential of individuals, scientific activity seems to be a collective enterprise, rather than isolated work of outstanding individual minds. The collective character, represented by the *Zeitgeist*, appears both on the input and output side of the model. On the input side, being informed about the scientific knowledge produced previously by the scientific community is one precondition for creating new results. The scientist also needs an idea about the accepted methodological rules of research and a large background knowledge serving as an association base in his research work, not to mention the technical and social skills provided by his local culture.

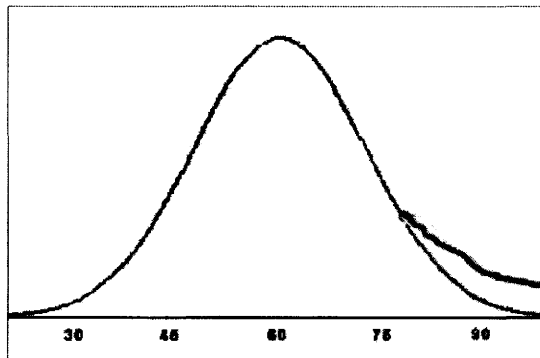
The screening process of the results takes place on the output side. An output of scientific research is considered a result, only if it has been communicated and in this way has some influence on the field. (An interesting idea, a new observation, or an invention that had no influence on the field, had not become an accepted or debated part of science could only be an attractive subject for historians.) Consequently, the existence of a scientific audience, an institutional system able to evaluate the output, able to give credit to the author, and able to transmit the output to the wider professional and non-professional community is an indispensable component of scientific creativity.

### **Creative Hungarians versus Hungarian Creativity**

In analyzing the Hungarian phenomenon from the point of view of creativity, both the genius and the *Zeitgeist* model can be applied. When considering the high number of excellent scientists, we rely on an individualistic, biological, psychological approach and refer to the brain, the quality of "the gray cells", as the most important factor. I call this the creative Hungarians approach, relying solely on the

fact that the number of creative Hungarians is exceptionally high. In this approach the occurrence of a high number of extremely able brains could be attributed to some genetic causes. These causes are formed either by the long tradition of intellectual work in some, mostly Jewish, families, or by the beneficial effect of mixing the genes of the many ethnic groups traditionally living in Hungary. When applying the genius model, we consider the Hungarian creativity as a biological, psychological or cognitive scientific event related to individuals. Because this argument is based on statistics, on the number of the very successful scientists, the advocates of this theory list more names as Hungarian scientific geniuses than those, who do not approve the theory. The advocates list fourteen Nobel Prize winners, instead of eight, considering Barany, Zsigmondy, John Polanyi or Hersko to be Hungarian because they were descendants of families that had lived in Hungary. The supporters of the genius theory imply that although some Nobelists were not socialized as Hungarians, they were Hungarians “by birth”, as if to be a Hungarian would constitute a genetic fact, the same way as in the case of a scientific genius. In this way the problem who is a Hungarian and who is not becomes a crucial point pertaining to the core of the creative Hungarians argument.

Underlying the genius theory of the Hungarian phenomenon, a particular shift should be assumed to take place in the distribution of the gift in the population. The probabilistic distribution of any features, including the gift for doing science, whatever way this quality is defined, in a large population is described by a bell curve shown by the thin line in *Figure 2*.<sup>15</sup>



*Figure 2.* The probable distribution of “gift” in population

The horizontal axis shows the growing gift, the vertical the number of people. Accordingly, very few people belong to the extremely ungifted and the genius category. Most people belong to places between the extremes, having some gift though not very big or very small. According to the creative Hungarians theory, in Hungary instead of the normal distribution of the narrow line, somewhat more



people belong to the very gifted or genius category, as the thick line shows. Such a shift in the distribution, however, needs to be proved by measurements and explained by events that changed the probabilistic distribution. However, no such kind of measurement exists, and no events of biological significance have been detected. Therefore, the thick line seems imaginary. Consequently, there is no rational basis for accepting the creative Hungarian theory, to think that in the Hungarian population the rate of scientifically extremely gifted people is higher than in any other large enough national population.

The statistical argumentation shows that a certain part of the population is always particularly gifted in any time, even if this part is not larger in a population than in the other. The important social issue is whether a given society provides suitable circumstances for people with high gifts to become successful or they do not represent either an important asset for the society or the society is unable to make use of the gift.

In this way, the existence of the Hungarian phenomenon suggests that Hungary provided favorable circumstances for gifted people. Although the number of very good brains, processing modules, was not higher than in other countries, the *Zeitgeist*, the social, cultural milieu was more stimulative. When analyzing the impact of this milieu, I speak about Hungarian creativity, referring to the collective, social, cultural characters of the phenomenon in contrast with the individual character of the creative Hungarians approach.

### **Hungarian *Zeitgeist* as a Source for Scientific Creativity**

Hungarian creativity, defined as *Zeitgeist*, was communal, social, as it related to a national culture, not primarily to individual abilities.<sup>16</sup> In this approach, the “good brains”, the individual gifts, and other personal features (endurance, ambition, etc.) are considered as necessary but not sufficient conditions for becoming a successful scientist. These features are put into brackets while focusing on the scientific input and output of Hungarians.

From the input point of view, the social, cultural circumstances were favorable at the beginning of the twentieth century. Before the First World War, during a peaceful era, Hungary lived as a part of the liberal, *laissez faire* Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and enjoyed an unprecedented modernization process. The economy grew vigorously. Agriculture was robust. New factories, new industrial branches, banks were born, urbanization progressed, including the modern capital, Budapest, with its wide boulevards, elegant buildings, electric lights, urban transportation, newspapers, and all this happened within a few decades. Modernity partly formed by and partly resulted from the birth of a new middle class recruited to a

large extent from people, who originated from outside the traditional Hungarian classes, and included Jews, Germans, Croats, Greeks, Slovaks, and others. In Budapest, a vivid, frivolous, open, multicultural atmosphere became prevalent. It was similar to that of contemporary Vienna, which had educated the philosopher, Ludwig Wittgenstein, the psychoanalyst, Sigmund Freud, the writer Robert Musil, the physicist Ludwig Boltzmann, and so many others.

The scientists of the Hungarian phenomenon were educated in this world. They all were born in middle class families, many in assimilated Jewish families. They lived in pleasant large apartment houses in Budapest, with successful working fathers. Von Neumann's father, a banker, Békésy's father, a diplomat, Teller's father, a lawyer could serve as typical examples. The mother took care of the household, directed the domestic help. The families had lots of books, often a piano, and paintings. The families spoke several languages, above all German because they often went to Vienna to do their shopping or just see the latest theater shows. Their young children were taught at home by private teachers, learning to read and write, simple calculations, music, sport, and foreign languages. This kind of instruction could conform to the child's personal requirements, interests, and the pace depended on their interests and abilities. By the time they started school, around the age of 10, they had the most important skills, including a kind of style and manners.

The schools in Budapest, mainly on the Pest side, were sometimes good enough to contribute to the development of the gifted children. Usually, however, as everywhere, the schools were fashioned to serve the instruction of average children. Some of them tolerated the genius students, as in the case of Wigner and Kármán, sometimes not, as with Teller and others. These high schools provided better instruction in the humanistic fields than in science. Thus, these schools might have served the students extremely gifted in science better than if they had provided a somewhat higher level science program, because they could progress in science by following their own interests and speed.

Many members of the group of Hungarians gifted in science proved extremely able in mathematics even before they started school, and mathematics was precisely the field that gave wonderful extramural opportunities for progress.<sup>17</sup> A journal, called *Középiskolai Matematikai Lapok* (Journal of High-School Mathematics) published interesting and very difficult problems that could only be solved by creative students. They sent their solutions to the editors, who published the wittiest solutions with the names of the students. Many Hungarian students who later became outstanding scientists could be found among the best problem solvers. The journal awakened in the students a competitive ambition that would later be served more openly by the student competitions.<sup>18</sup> The Eötvös competition (named after the physicist Roland Eötvös, who served as an exemplar in science) was organized yearly for high school students. This was also a mathematical and

physical problem solving competition, in which to achieve a good result was a great honor. Among the winners, we can find Kármán, Szilárd, Teller, Harsanyi.<sup>19</sup>

The Hungarian phenomenon scientists started the university in Budapest. Some of them, such as Kármán, Michael Polanyi, Szent-Györgyi and Harsanyi graduated there, others, such as Hevesy, Szilárd, Wigner, Gábor continued their studies abroad, mostly in Germany, after some semesters in Budapest, while Békésy and Teller studied exclusively in foreign universities. The Hungarian universities did not inspire them very much. In addition to mathematics, in which some very influential professors lectured at the university, including Lipót Fejér, Gyula König, Frigyes Riesz, and others, and besides some insulated persons, e.g., the physiologist Ferenc Tangl, the Hungarian universities could not contribute much to the progress of these students.<sup>20</sup>

They could, however, meet brilliant people outside the universities. The Budapest middle class intellectuals had a non-institutionalized network that included family life, sports, coffee houses, and other circles (the Galileo circle was the most prominent). Michael Polanyi's mother lead a saloon in her living room, where scientists, artists, writers, younger and older people met and discussed regularly. Over the dinner table of the Neumann family, all kinds of poets, psychoanalysts, mathematicians, economists discussed the latest events of many areas of life. In these informal circles, gifts, knowledge, wit and sensibility were more appreciated than in the institutionalized part of society. These circles constituted the scenes of a large part of their intellectual education giving an impetus to the open-minded young generation.

After the two World Wars, however, life changed a great deal. Following the first war an authoritarian right wing, after the second war a communist regime took over. The wide multicultural horizon with the liberal political atmosphere seemed to have largely gone after the first war; even the remnants disappeared after the second. Even before the first war, the dark shadow of anti-Semitism appeared as more than a menace. The families of the young students understood or just felt that their sons' future was insecure. One conclusion of this feeling was to choose a field that provided a good opportunity to earn a living in all civilized countries. Therefore, the mathematically or theoretically gifted sons studied in practical fields such as industrial chemistry (even von Neumann and Wigner), engineering (Szilárd, Gábor), or medicine and pharmacy (Szent-Györgyi, Polanyi, Harsanyi), rather than in mathematics, theoretical physics or philosophy. The other conclusion was that the future in Hungary was not safe. After the first war, most of the bright sons moved to Germany, while after the second war those who had stayed in Hungary (Békésy, Szent-Györgyi, Harsanyi, and Oláh) left for the USA. Here, they could meet their fellow Hungarians who fled from Hungary after the first war and from the Nazi Germany in the 1930s. Emigration gave them shelter but the competition they met abroad gave them the feeling that they should be

brilliant for their mere survival as scientists. The recognition of the importance of emigration was the last and most important source of success that they gained as input in Hungary.

### **The Characteristic Features on the Output Side**

These Hungarian phenomenon scientists had received the basic training in their scientific fields outside Hungary. For the most part their scientific output was realized on the international intellectual market. The Hungarian context was manifested rather in their research strategy, their choice of subject, and style than in the scientific content of their results.

In many of their most important results, they could combine the theoretical, mathematical impulses gathered in Budapest with practical mindedness originating from their university studies. The abstract theoretical physicist, Wigner was considered the first nuclear engineer, von Neumann, the mathematician was a pioneer in building computers, Szent-Györgyi, the researcher of biological combustion discovered vitamin C, Oláh, the pioneer of super acid chemistry works on energy cells and, vice versa, the mechanic engineer, Kármán significantly contributed to solid-state physics. The most spectacular activity was the Hungarians' participation in the Manhattan Project aimed at building the first atomic bomb.

In emigration, in particular in Germany around 1920, finding an academic job was virtually impossible because of the competition. Nevertheless, new disciplines and new approaches were born then. Biochemistry, quantum physics, nuclear physics began to emerge. They were more open to anybody, including emigrants, than the classical fields occupied by the highly esteemed local authorities. In addition to their intellectual gifts, their knowledge and love of mathematics helped the Hungarians to work in these new abstract theoretical fields.

Many of them did research in the intersection of different disciplines, such as physical chemistry (Polanyi), quantum chemistry (Wigner, Teller), biophysics (Békésy), biochemistry (Szent-Györgyi), mathematical economy (von Neumann, Harsanyi), nuclear medicine (Hevesy), technical physics (Gábor). They were versatile. They easily changed their successful fields: Polanyi changed from chemistry to philosophy, Wigner from quantum chemistry to nuclear physics, then to solid-state physics, Szilárd from physics to biology, Hevesy from electrochemistry to nuclear biology. They crossed the borders of countries and disciplines with similar ease. When moving from Germany to America or Britain or Denmark, the adaptation to the new circumstances required change in the research work. Flexibility was connected to versatility, with working on several fields.

The advantage of many interests originated from Hungary, from the circles of the intelligentsia constituted by specialists of very different fields and discussing

diverse subjects. This kind of discussion requires and educates the ability of problem solving disregarding the field to which the given problem belongs. In this way, their results depended on the problems raised in their actual institutional positions, local scientific communities or, as some of them supposed, the entire contemporary human civilization.

The commitment to the most important matters of humanity, the feeling that they can and they had to save the world is expressed in Szilárd's essay on the "Bund"<sup>21</sup> or in Polanyi's philosophy. Implicitly and sometimes explicitly, this mentality is present in the vivid and visible political activity of the Hungarian phenomenon scientists. Szilárd initiated both the work on nuclear arms and the prohibition of its usage; Wigner designed nuclear reactors that produced the fissionable substance for the bombs and later became active in civil defense. Von Neumann worked as an adviser in Los Alamos, then as a member of US Atom Energy Commission; Teller became the chief designer of the hydrogen bomb. Szent-Györgyi, who left Hungary after the communist takeover in 1947, fought against Nazism in Hungary, while in the USA he became part of the struggle for the peace movement. On the other side, Philip Lenard, a great supporter of Nazism, a founder of the "deutsche Physik" movement, openly expressed his strong anti-Semitic sentiments, although he never joined Hitler's party. In a different time period Dennis Gabor was active in the Roman Club, an early environmentalist movement, Harsanyi gave advice in the diplomatic negotiations between the two superpowers on the limitation of nuclear arms.

The political significance of these Hungarian phenomenon scientists' activity strongly contributed to their fame. They were good communicators of their views as can be verified by watching their performances on television, as well as in long interviews in popular magazines and daily newspapers. The audience could enjoy fervent, witty but very serious political debates between Szilárd and Teller on TV, or discussions of political problems by Szent-Györgyi and Teller in a Chicago radio station. Scientific and political success supported each other. Scientific success could be converted into important political status; thus indicating a shift in the scientists' role in society. The most relevant scientific problems became the most relevant political and moral issues.

### **Inspiring Screening and Evaluation**

From the output point of view, the success of the Hungarian phenomenon scientists was related to the effective screening and evaluating activity conducted by the actual local community. In an evolutionary approach, ideas and results survive

only if they are communicated and undergo long screening procedures before they are published. Some scientific communities play central roles in scientific research through their lavish projects, active universities, research institutes, well-equipped laboratories, and libraries, eminent experts, competing research stuff, occupy the position of evaluation. They select what and whom they need or what and whom they refuse. They have their vested interests in being well served by those who want to join. This ideal meritocratic work of the scientific center, in principle, provides a field of competition for scientific production.

The meritocratic character gave the migrating Hungarians better chances for finding their good fortune than in those fields of life in which being embedded in a local culture was more important than in science. Nevertheless, even science cannot work on an ideal universalistic meritocratic basis as its universal character is manifested through local activities and influenced by the interests of the participants. For success, the Hungarians had to establish contacts with the local scientific communities of the country in which they worked. In this, their practice in networking proved to be of great help. Networking means the establishment of non-institutionalized relationships, an activity that intrinsically belonged to the Budapest urban, middle class, intellectual culture, to the main source of their thinking. In emigration they built up two kinds of networks, an insider network for themselves and an outsider network with the larger local scientific community. Both had two central figures: Michael Polanyi and Leo Szilard (however, Kármán, Hevesy and Teller were also outstanding in establishing networks). Through these central networkers, the Hungarians established close personal relationships with the emblematic personalities of twentieth-century science, such as Albert Einstein, Max Planck, Niels Bohr, David Hilbert, Ernst Rutherford, Fritz Haber and many others. Networking helped them in adaptation to the new circumstances, in learning the latest ideas from the authors themselves, in selecting the most promising subjects for their research, in understanding the requirements for success, and it was very useful in finding new jobs, when they had to change homes.

All the Hungarian scientists became successful outside Hungary, not in their own country. Szent-Györgyi was the only one who received the Nobel Prize while working in Hungary. However, he returned to Szeged from a long stay in Cambridge, England a decisive center of biochemistry during that time. He identified himself with G. N. Hopkins' research school and style of thinking; and his research was supported by American foundations, including the Rockefeller Foundation and the Josiah Macy Jr. even during his Szeged years. After the Second World War, Szent-Györgyi emigrated from Hungary. It was Békésy, who had developed his theory of hearing in Hungary, for which he received the Nobel Prize,

and who wrote about the advantage of doing research in Hungary, which was after all a quiet and isolated place. He was the exception. Yet, he was also decorated with the Noble Prize as a Harvard professor after leaving Hungary in 1945.<sup>22</sup>

The success achieved in a Western center of science was not due to the personal presence of some Hungarians working there, though this could also play some role. For success, for being selected by the scientific community as an eminent member, one has to work on subjects that the central community considers as the most relevant ones, and the contribution should be extremely significant.

The Manhattan Project was a particularly suitable opportunity to become successful and famous. Its relevance was behind any doubt because it was set up to defeat Nazism and successfully end the war. In this goal politics met science and technological development as they had never met before and exactly as they had met in the minds of the Hungarians. To defeat Nazism, and later Communism, the totalitarian political systems gave opportunities to the Hungarians for saving the world, for being active in the most relevant issues of the whole humankind at their time. They had to use both their theoretical and practical abilities and knowledge, since the problems to be solved raised all kinds of organizational, political, technological, mathematical, physical and chemical problems. Many members of the Hungarian group could cope with such complex tasks. Szilárd and Wigner participated in the design of the first nuclear plant, and then Wigner directed the technological side of the Oak Ridge laboratory, while Szilárd was active in political issues. Teller did research on fusion reactions; von Neumann helped in working out the implosion techniques and recognized the importance of electronic computing. Kármán contributed to the development of aircraft, started missile research in the US, and then became a chief scientific advisor in NATO.

The screening and evaluating processes are easier, if the tasks of the research are clear and the personal contributions to the work of the members of the group, even in an extremely large group, are distinguishable, visible, and well-known. The product speaks for itself. This was the case with Dennis Gabor's holography, a theoretical idea that came to reality with the development of lasers. The same was true with George Hevesy whose radioactive tracer method became part of the standard medical practice following the creation of artificial radioactive isotopes twenty years after Hevesy's purely scientific investigations. George Oláh built up a new chemistry applicable in carbohydrate, including petrol, technology.

For an appreciation these results an effective intellectual market is necessary in the restricted academic and in the wider, business or intellectual, senses of the expression. This was what the Hungarians found in their ever changing locations for research and could not find in Hungary.



### Conclusions

A simple model of scientific creativity provided a framework for discussing the assumed special abilities of Hungarian scientists. The statistical argument for the existence of a particular Hungarian form of creativity, which refers to the relatively large number of very successful scientists as compared with the size of the Hungarian population, can be interpreted in two ways. First, we may employ an individualistic, biological, psychological approach, which is related to the genius theory of creativity, implies that the high number should be related to some kind of genetic advantage of the Hungarian population. However, no additional evidence was presented to prove this hypothesis, only the high number of gifted people from around the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries was cited.

Second, in a collective, sociological, cultural approach, called *Zeitgeist* theory, the statistical argument receives another interpretation. Refusing to assume the presence of any biological event that could enhance the number of gifted people in the Hungarian population above the number given by probabilistic estimation, the *Zeitgeist* theory focuses on the social conditions that can be favorable, or not favorable, for extremely gifted people to realize their intellectual potential. Success is a more adequate term for analysis than gift, which is individualistic and biological. *Zeitgeist* approach presumes the presence of a certain number of gifted people in all societies as a fact of probability, and emphasizes the role of social circumstances in the success of these people.

Accordingly, in the twentieth century, Hungary could provide an excellent intellectual input to young people for starting an intellectual career. This input can only be shown in some implicit features of their scientific results because they were trained as scientists outside Hungary, mostly in Germany and Switzerland, or in some cases in Britain. Their thinking style, their selection of fields and subjects, some features of their research strategy, however, were closely related to their Hungarian culture.

The success of the Hungarian phenomenon scientists is measured by their output. For the appreciation of the output, they needed a suitable audience, a meritocratic scientific community, interested and thirsty for the results they could produce. To put their abilities, their problem solving passion, their theoretical and practical inclinations, their political mindedness in motion, a community was necessary. In the lack of this, their abilities would never come to the light. Therefore, a key factor of their success was that they left Hungary to work in a scientific center that could make use of their potential. Even without an anti-Semitic, anti-democratic Horthy regime, or an isolationist communist Rákosi regime, they could not meet the challenge of the Manhattan Project, the project of electronic computers,

and many other things, because Hungary never initiated such large projects. Consequently, the Hungarian phenomenon scientists could really use their abilities in scientific centers that could provide the necessary meritocratic scientific life.

### Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Vaclav Smil, "Genius loci: The twentieth century was made in Budapest". *Nature* 409(4) (January 2001): 21.
- <sup>2</sup> Arthur Koestler, *The Act of Creation*. London: Hutchinson and Co., 1964; George Polya, *How to Solve it: A New Aspect of Mathematical Method*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1945; Michael Polanyi, *Personal Knowledge: Towards a Post-Critical Philosophy*. London: Routledge and Kegan, 1958; Imre Lakatos, *Proofs and Refutations: The Logic of Mathematical Discovery*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976; Mihály Csikszentmihályi, *Creativity: Flow and the Psychology of Discovery and Invention*. New York: Harper and Collins, 1996.
- <sup>3</sup> The series: *Reception and Creativity* (series editor Gábor Palló) consists of seven works: *Közelítések a magyar filozófia történetéhez: Magyarország és a modernitás* [Approximations to the History of Hungarian Philosophy], ed. Béla Mester, László Percz, *A kreativitás mintázatai: Magyar tudósok, magyar intézmények a modernitás kihívásában* [The Patterns of Creativity: Hungarian Scientists and Institutions in Modernity], ed. Vera Békés, *Átvilágítás: a magyar színház európai kontextusban* [The Hungarian Theater in European Context], ed. Zoltán Imre, *Alkotás és befogadás a magyar nyelv 18. század utáni történetében* [Reception and Creativity in the Post Eighteenth-Century History of the Hungarian Language], written by Gábor Tolcsvai Nagy, *A honi Kopernikusz-recepciótól a magyar Nobel-díjakig*. [From Copernicus' Reception to Nobel Prizes], ed. Gábor Palló, *Teremtő befogadás: Összefüggések, tanulságok* [Creative Reception: Conclusions], ed. Gábor Palló. The full text of all the books can be downloaded from the Internet: <http://zeus.phil-inst.hu/recepcio/>.
- <sup>4</sup> See, e.g., George Marx, *The Voice of the Martians*, Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1997, and Endre Czeizel, *Tudósok, gének, dilemmák: A magyar származású Nobel-díjasok családfa-elemzése*. [Scientists, genes, dilemmas: an analysis of the family trees of the Hungarian Nobel Prize winners]. Budapest: Galenus Kiadó, 2002.
- <sup>5</sup> Harriet Zuckerman, *Scientific Elite: Nobel Laureates in the United States*. New York–London: The Free Press 1977.
- <sup>6</sup> Although the list of the uncrowned kings is far from complete, to list scientists who remained in Hungary and became nearly as successful as the listed ones, would be difficult, except some mathematicians.
- <sup>7</sup> Francis Galton, *Hereditary Genius*, London: Macmillan, 1869; Cesare Lombroso, *The Man of Genius*, Walter Scott, 1891.
- <sup>8</sup> E. Paul Torrance, *Guiding Creative Talent*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1962, E. Paul Torrance, *Rewarding Creative Behavior; Experiments in Classroom Creativity*, Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1965.
- <sup>9</sup> R. J. Sternberg, *The Nature of Creativity*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988.
- <sup>10</sup> See Eysenck's works, e.g., Hans J. Eysenck, *Genius: The Natural History of Creativity*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995. Edward De Bono, *Lateral Thinking: Creativity Step by Step*. Harper & Row, 1973.
- <sup>11</sup> Robert K. Merton, "Singletons and Multiples in Scientific Discovery: A Chapter in the Sociology of Science", In. R. K. Merton, *The Sociology of Science: Theoretical and Empirical Inves-*

tigation. Chicago–London: The University of Chicago Press, 1973. The article was first published in 1961.

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14 Mihály Csikszentmihályi, *Creativity: Flow and the Psychology of Discovery and Invention*. New York: Harper and Collins, 1996. Csikszentmihályi, *Creativity...* footnote 2.

15 About the problematic implications of the bell curve’s application to the human intelligence, see Gould’s criticism on Herrnstein and Murray’s book (The Bell Curve) in Stephen Jay Gould, *The Mismeasure of Man*.

16 I have written about the Hungarian phenomenon in a Zeitgeist approach in Palló Gábor, *Zsenialitás és korszellem* [Genius and Zeitgeist]. Budapest: Áron Kiadó, 2004.

17 See Reuben Hersh, Vera John-Steiner, “A Visit to Hungarian Mathematics”, *The Mathematical Intelligencer* 15 (1993): 13–26.

18 Viktor Starnitzky, “100 éves a Középiskolai Matematikai Lapok”, [The Journal of High school Mathematics is 100 years old] *Természet Világa* [The world of nature], 124 (1993/12): 562–569.

19 See Gyula Radnai, “Az Eötvös-verseny centenáriuma” [The Centenary of the Eötvös competition]. *Fizikai Szemle*, 44 (1994): 421–424.

20 Concerning the biographical details, I do not make references in all points. These details are based on a long study. Many details can be read in the published biographies of the Hungarian scientists, the most important among them are as follows: T. E. Allibone, “Dennis Gabor”, *Biographical Memoirs of Fellow of the Royal Society*, 1980, 107–147, Stanley A. Blumberg, Gwinn Owens, *Energy and Conflict: The Life and Times of Edward Teller* New York: G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1976, Edward Teller, with Judith Shoolery, *Memoirs: A Twentieth-Century Journey in Science and Politics*. Cambridge, MA: Perseus Publishing, 2001, Th. Kármán, L. Edson, *The Wind and Beyond: Theodore von Kármán Pioneer in Aviation and Pathfinder in Space*. Boston–Toronto: Little, Brown and Co. 1967, W. Lanouette, B. Szilard, *Genius in the Shadows: A Biography of Leo Szilard*. New York–Toronto: Charles Scribner’s Sons, Maxwell Macmillan 1992, H. Levi, *George de Hevesy: Life and Work*. Copenhagen: Rhodos, 1985, Siegfried Niesse, *Georg von Hevesy: Wissenschaftler ohne Grenzen*. Dresden: Forschungszentrum Rossendorf, 2005, N. Macrae, *John von Neumann*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1992, R. W. Moss, *Free Radical: Albert Szent-Gyorgyi and the Battle over Vitamin C*. New York: Paragon House Publishers, 1988, George A. Olah, *A Life of Magic Chemistry: Autobiographical Reflections of a Nobel Prize Winner*. New York, etc: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., Publication, 2001, Richard Rhodes, *The Making of the Atomic Bomb*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1986, Richard Rhodes, *Dark Sun: The Making of the Hydrogen Bomb*. New York, London etc: Simon and Schuster, 1995. A. Szanton, *The Recollections of Eugene P. Wigner*. New York–London: Plenum Press, 1992, E. P. Wigner, “Michael Polanyi”, *Biographical Memoirs of the Fellows of the Royal Society*, 23 (1977): 413–448. William T. Scott, Martin X. Moleski, S.J., *Michael Polanyi: Scientist and Philosopher*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.

21 Leo Szilard, “Der Bund”, reprinted in S. R. Weart, G. Weiss Szilard, *Leo Szilard: His Version of the Facts*. London, UK – Cambridge, MA: MIT Press 1978, 23.

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# MAGNETIC RESONANCE IMAGE-GUIDED NEUROSURGERY

FERENC A. JOLESZ

Harvard Medical School, Boston, MA  
USA

The combination of advanced neuro-navigation, 3D multi-modality image fusion and intra-operative MRI can fulfill the promise of an integrated image guidance system for neurosurgery. The concept of MRI-guided neurosurgery is now widely accepted and preliminary evidence suggests that MRI guidance greatly improves the safety and effectiveness of neurosurgical procedures. The application of intra-operative MRI is especially helpful in the surgical excision of low grade gliomas (tumor resection control). Among the currently developed thermal therapy methods, focused ultrasound (FUS) appears to be the most promising method for non-invasive neurosurgery.

**Keywords:** magnetic resonance imaging, navigation, brain tumor, focused ultrasound

## Introduction

Since its introduction as a diagnostic tool in the mid-1980s, MRI has evolved into the premier neuroimaging modality; and with the addition of higher field magnets, we are able to achieve spatial resolution of such superb quality that even the most exquisite details of the brain's anatomy can be visualized. Indeed, particularly within neurosurgery, Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) has emerged as a supremely useful diagnostic tool; and similarly, the implementation of intra-operative neurosurgical MRI has had a major impact on conventional surgical approaches. We not only can monitor brain shifts and deformations, we can achieve intraoperative navigation using intraoperative image updates. In the near future, intraoperative MRI will be used to localize, target, and resect brain tumors and other lesions as well as elucidate the surrounding functional anatomy. In addition to the inclusion of new imaging methods, such as diffusion tensor imaging (DTI) and functional MRI, new therapeutic methods will be applied. For example, within MRI-guided focused ultrasound surgery, among the most promising new therapeutic approaches is the non-invasive thermal ablation of tumors, which uses

MRI guidance to control and monitor the area of interest. With the clinical introduction of these advances, intraoperative MRI is rapidly changing the face of neurosurgery today [1, 2].

In modern neurosurgery, however, there is a growing need for imaging both brain morphology *and* function. To achieve this, imaging must be comprehensively integrated with surgery and the various components of the operating environment must be completely reassessed. Successful integration entails the introduction of interactive dynamic imaging, high performance computing, and real time image processing in the operating room. Novel intraoperative imaging techniques are being aggressively developed and tested for their diagnostic and clinical utility. These techniques, in turn, will be applied to several revolutionary image-guided therapy methods that are currently being explored, and which will eventually be incorporated into standard neurosurgical practice.

### **Image-guided Neurosurgery**

The fundamental principle of image-guided neurosurgery is to target, access, and remove intracranial lesions without injuring normal and functioning brain tissue or intact blood vessels. The overall concern is the preservation of neurological function, which requires precise delineation of functional anatomy and correct definition of tumor margins. During surgery, the visual appearance of the infiltrating malignant tumors is sometimes indistinguishable from the adjacent normal brain tissue. Because of the difficulty in recognizing exact tumor margins, complete resection is, in most cases, problematic.

Early work with brain stereotaxis has established the importance and value of image guidance through better determination of tumor margins, better localization of lesions, and optimization of the targeting. In current practice, computer-assisted, image-guided surgery has replaced stereotactic neurosurgery. Frame-based and frameless stereotaxis using 2-D and 3-D images have shown that neurosurgery can be performed less invasively, yet with greater precision and accuracy.

For the neurosurgeon, the goal is to achieve complete tumor resection while maximally preserving normal brain tissue and function. Ideally, the physician should be able to precisely localize the lesion, choose the optimal trajectory of approach, and accurately determine the margins of the tumor and its separation from the normal brain. Using advanced computing technologies, these surgical "steps" are now undertaken with a remarkable degree of confidence and accuracy. Specifically, surgical planning uses multimodality and multiparametric lesion characterization, and includes the full depiction of the relevant anatomical structures and their related functions. The 3D multimodality image fusions represent an enrich-

ment of the information provided by the MRI slices alone. They do not change the diagnosis, but can contribute substantially to surgical planning by providing additional information regarding a) the optimal craniotomy and corticotomy sites; b) surgical excision margins; and c) access trajectories to the targeted tumors. In addition to image-guidance, the most novel aspect of neurosurgical planning is the *intraoperative* use of the 3D model for interactive surgical simulation such as trajectory optimization, access route selection, and in the case of thermal therapy, 3D thermal dosimetry. Surgical planning also includes various avoidance strategies in the proximity of the lesion to the sensory and motor tracts and deep brain structures (basal ganglia) and to essential vascular structures or cranial nerves. All the available and relevant anatomical and functional information should play a role in the construction of 3D models. Surgical planning is also linked to co-registration (multimodality fusion) and should be completed in the operating room with the registration of the 3D surgical planning model to the patient anatomy.

Current advances in MRI, specifically functional MRI (fMRI) and diffusion tensor imaging (DTI) significantly improve localization and targeting within the cortical grey matter (functional anatomy) and along deep white matter structures (connectivity). In addition, contrast enhanced dynamic MRI, magnetic resonance spectroscopy (MRS), positron emission tomography (PET), and the single photon emission computed tomography (SPECT) provide complementary physiologic and/or metabolic data, allowing further differentiation of brain tissue and improved characterization of brain tumors [2, 3].

Multimodality and multiparametric model generation requires extensive image processing of the preoperative data, including image segmentation, parameter extraction, and parameter mapping and co-registration of data from multiple sources. The same tasks can be performed before or during the procedure. The multiple different data sets are aligned using a multimodal registration method based on the maximization of the inherent mutual information contained by the images originating from the same patient.

Image acquisition and intraoperative image processing have improved steadily in recent years. In parallel, this has resulted in increasingly sophisticated multimodality image fusion and registration, although most methods are confined to rigid structures. Moreover, clinical experience with image-guided therapy in deep brain structures and with large resections has revealed the limitations of existing rigid registration and visualization approaches. For example, the deformations of brain anatomy during surgery obviously require the application of non-rigid registration algorithms and the updating of anatomic changes using intraoperative imaging.

### **Intraoperative MRI-guided Neurosurgery**

Surgical manipulations and maneuvers result in a change in the anatomic position of brain shifts and deformations that occur frequently during surgery. The leakage of cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) after opening the dura, hyperventilation, the administration of anesthetic and osmotic agents, and retraction and resection of tissue all contribute to shifting of the brain parenchyma. This makes information based upon preoperatively acquired images somewhat unreliable, and this unreliability increases substantially as a surgical procedure continues. Intraoperative imaging, on the other hand, allows accurate updates of changes and the use of correct localization and targeting coordinates. The challenge of intraoperative MRI is not only to update the position of the continuously deforming brain tissue, but also to provide the interactivity required for an image-guided therapy system. Interactive intraoperative MRI guidance allows the physician to accurately localize and target the lesion during neurosurgical procedures and to optimize surgical approaches to avoid critical structures and decrease exposure of surrounding normal, functionally critical tissues.

Intraoperative MRI can facilitate surgical localization and targeting and, at the same time, using interactive multiplanar imaging, improve intraoperative navigation. Moreover, MRI can provide real time feedback information intraoperatively. This conceptual approach has been made feasible with an appropriately configured, open access MRI system (SIGNA SP, General Electric Medical System, Milwaukee, WI). This system incorporates several objectives of intraoperative guidance. First, it represents an attempt to overcome the restrictions of closed configuration MRIs. Second, in addition to providing access to the patient's exposed anatomy, intraoperative MRI gives the neurosurgeon an opportunity to "see" beyond the exposed surfaces. Third, it offers a more sensitive method than direct visualization for distinguishing diseased tissue from normal tissue. Finally, it can monitor and detect changes in brain anatomy and tissue integrity that occur during surgical procedures.

Operating with interactive MRI guidance offers neurosurgeons several advantages over stereotactic guidance systems including *tissue characterization* that effectively aids the surgeon in distinguishing normal from abnormal tissue during resection. However, to identify tumor, especially residual tissue that remains following resection, sufficient spatial and contrast resolution is necessary. Unfortunately, this cannot be accomplished with low field MRI systems. Only relatively high field MRI can produce images with superior resolution; and only completely open systems can offer optimal surgical access. Thus, magnet configuration and field strength require a compromise between image quality and accessibility. An optimal system for neurosurgical guidance, in fact, may have several options from mid-field to high field and from closed to completely open scanners.



From the navigational point of view, intraoperative MRI does not require a frame of reference for transformation and registration. It offers direct image coordinates in localizing a lesion in three-dimensional space and allows this localization to be updated in a dynamic fashion. This has major implications on the ability to obtain accurate biopsies or correct resections of margins. Interactive use of MRI also allows the selection of the optimal trajectories for various neurosurgical approaches. Brain surgeries can be carefully planned and then executed under MRI guidance, which, in turn, minimizes the surgical exposure and the related damage to the normal brain. The maximal preservation of normal tissue may contribute to decreased surgical morbidity. Specifically, intraoperative MRI can decrease surgical complications by identifying normal structures, such as blood vessels, white matter fiber tracts, and cortical regions with functional significance. However, intraoperative complications, such as hemorrhage, ischemia, or edema are possible and can directly affect the outcome.

Special features unique to MRI both enhance the information available during a procedure and guide therapy [1, 2, 3]. These include flow sensitivity, evaluation of perfusion, administration of contrast agents to detect a breakdown of the blood-brain-barrier (BBB), or communication among CSF compartments. In addition, the ability of MRI to detect temperature changes can be exploited to monitor and control thermal ablations. Images acquired intraoperatively can also be combined and correlated with preoperatively acquired studies such as SPECT or PET scans, prior CT studies, and functional MRI studies. *The ultimate goal of intraoperative image guidance is to combine preoperative and intraoperative image data into a comprehensive "package" of information that is indispensable to accurate surgical decision making.* Indeed, this "data package" offers several benefits: (1) with intraoperative MRI, images can be obtained at each stage of a given procedure without moving the patient and without significantly extending the surgery; (2) a lesion can be accurately and even more importantly, directly localized; (3) changes in the anatomy due to brain shifting can be immediately recognized; (4) the correlation between the surgeon's field of view and the image allows confirmation of the exact location of pathologic tissue; and (5) serial images allow evaluation of the extent of excision and aids complete removal when possible.

### **Intraoperative Navigation**

In current neurosurgical practice, the localization of a brain lesion and the surrounding anatomy relies exclusively upon preoperative image data and intraoperative electrophysiological measurements. Although preoperative image data can be used for surgical planning and intraoperative navigational guidance, the

use of this information is limited because of the unavoidable deformation of the brain during surgery. Fortunately, intraoperative MRI can resolve this problem if appropriate navigational tools are implemented. For example, by using advanced computer technology, neurosurgery can overcome the inherent inconvenience of frame-based systems. Frameless, computer-assisted navigational systems, however, require image-processing methods such as segmentation, registration, and interactive display. Using various image-processing methods, a computer-based model of the brain can be generated, and within this model, structures can be highlighted.

“Tracking” is the process by which interactive localization is achieved within the patient’s coordinate system. Methods of tracking include articulated arms, optical tracking, passive systems, sonic digitizers, and electro-magnetic sensors. Active optical trackers use multiple video cameras to triangulate the 3D location of flashing light emitting diodes (LEDs) that can be mounted on any surgical instrument. Passive tracking systems use a video camera (or multiple video cameras) to localize markers that have been placed on surgical instruments. These systems do not use a power cable attached to the handheld localizer. Moreover, both LED and passive vision localization systems require at least a *partial* line of sight between the landmarks or emitters and imaging sensor at all times when an object is tracked. Electro-magnetic digitizers operate without such restrictions and further, can track instruments placed inside the body or objects that are out of view.

An ideal intraoperative MRI combines MRI imaging with interactive localization of the surgical instruments, intra-operative displays, and computer workstations. However, software tools for visualizing the segmented models and the MRI scans in concert with the tracked instruments are needed to provide direct feedback to the surgeon. The 3D model of the patient must correlate directly to the actual images. The tracked probe enables the physician to depict the position of the probe relative to the segmented structures and to the original scan. The surgeon is thus equipped with an enhanced view of the surgical field relative to the entire anatomical model of the patient.

Intraoperative MRI has a number of applications with specific requirements for dynamic MRI, particularly MR fluoroscopy, which can operate on an “open” MR scanner without extraordinary gradient coil or RF coil hardware parameters in place. The typical interventional “open” magnet configuration disallows current dynamic MRI methods. For example, it cannot be outfitted with specialized gradient coils with the high slew rate necessary for echo planar-based fast MRI. Thus, the need exists for innovative, dynamic MRI approaches. The most important applications that have specific requirements for dynamic MR, particularly MR fluoroscopy, include (1) monitoring thermal therapies, (2) catheter tip tracking, and (3) monitoring the progress of surgical resections. With 2D fluoroscopic imaging

capability, the surgeon can visually, or with computer-assistance, guide and monitor therapy or surgery for greater effectiveness and safety.

### **MRI-guided Thermal Ablations and Focused Ultrasound Surgery**

With the introduction of magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) as a monitoring method for thermal therapies, a novel mechanism for controlling energy deposition was developed [4]. Many MRI parameters are sensitive to temperature changes that make MRI suitable for monitoring thermal ablations by noninvasive means. Furthermore, the physician can take advantage of diffusion MRI, which detects changes in water mobility and compartmentalization and identifies reversible as well as irreversible thermally induced tissue changes. However, MRI monitoring of thermal ablations is only feasible if the imaging and therapy delivery systems are integrated.

The role of MRI during thermal ablations is to monitor temperature levels, to restrict thermal coagulation to the targeted tissue volume, and to avoid heating of normal tissue. MRI can also detect irreversible tissue necrosis and demonstrate permanent changes within the treated tissue. Physiologic effects such as perfusion or metabolic response to elevated temperature can also be used for monitoring the ablation. Both flow and tissue perfusion can affect the rate and extent of energy delivery and the size of the treated tissue volumes [5]. Monitoring can optimize treatment protocols. Since the original description of MRI monitoring and control of laser–tissue interactions, MRI-guided interstitial laser therapy (ILT) and other MRI-guided thermal ablation methods have been clinically tested and accepted as minimally invasive treatment options [6]. ILT is a relatively simple, straightforward method, which can be well adapted to the interventional MRI environment. Overall, these early results suggest that “interstitial laser therapy” (ILT) is a safe therapy method. Although no definitive conclusion can be drawn based on the currently available data, it appears that ILT can be of benefit in patients with low-grade gliomas. In malignant gliomas, thermal therapy has been essentially unsuccessful, a predictable outcome, since such tumors extend far beyond the area of MRI contrast enhancement [7, 8, 9].

Among the currently developed thermal therapy methods, focused ultrasound (FUS) appears to be the most promising, since its use does not require any invasive intervention. The potential therapeutic use of ultrasound energy for intracranial pathology has long been acknowledged [10]. There is no more convincing example for the FUS benefits than in the brain, where deep lesions can be induced without any associated damage along the path of the acoustic beam. In the brain, where most injuries have detectable functional consequences, it is extremely important to limit tissue damage to the targeted area. This necessitates the use of an

imaging technique for localization, targeting, real-time intraoperative monitoring, and control of the spatial extent. Indeed, by combining FUS with MRI-based guidance and control, we might well achieve complete tumor ablation without any associated structural injury or functional deficit.

Beyond thermal coagulation of tissue, FUS has various other effects that can be therapeutically exploited and thus may open the way for potentially innovative vascular and functional neurosurgery applications as well as targeted drug delivery to the central nervous system [11]. Among the most important is focused ultrasound's ability to occlude vessels, which could make FUS a viable therapeutic tool for the treatment of vascular malformations [12]. Groundbreaking studies also show that FUS can also open the blood-brain barrier selectively without damaging the surrounding brain parenchyma [13]. To achieve this effect, preformed gas bubbles must be introduced into the vasculature, as is routinely done with ultrasound contrast agents. The gas bubbles implode and release cavitation-related energy, which transiently inactivates the tight junctions [14]. Consequently, large molecules can pass through the artificially created "window" in the blood-brain barrier. These large molecules can be chemotherapeutic or neuropharmacological agents. FUS-based, targeted selective drug delivery to the brain could result in novel therapeutic interventions for movement and psychiatric disorders. Such MRI-guided focal opening of the blood-brain barrier, combined with ultrasound technology that permits sonications through the intact skull will open the way for new, noninvasive, targeted therapies [15]. Specifically, it would provide targeted access for chemotherapeutic and gene therapy agents, as well as monoclonal antibodies, and could even provide a vascular route for performing neuro-transplantations.

Since the skull bone scatters and attenuates the propagation of the ultrasound beam, most clinical trials have been performed following craniotomy in order to provide an ultrasound window. However, the transcranial application of FUS, although challenging, is not impossible. Although bone scatters and absorbs most of the acoustic energy, a small fraction can penetrate through the skull. Recent simulation and experimental studies have demonstrated the feasibility of accurately focusing ultrasound through the intact skull by using an array of multiple ultrasound transducers arranged over a large surface area [16]. To correct for beam distortion, the driving signal for the transducer elements of the array is individually adjustable, based on measurements obtained with an invasive hydrophone probe, or better, based on detailed MRI. Because of the large surface area, the ultrasound energy is distributed in such a manner as to avoid heating and consequent damage of skin, bone, meninges, or surrounding normal brain parenchyma, while at the same time, is able to coagulate the tissue at the focus. The experimental data are extremely promising and a clinical trial is in progress at Harvard Medical School. Based on these preliminary results, the thermal coagulation of brain tumors

through the intact skull under MRI thermometry control using MR-compatible arrays appears feasible.

By applying multiple, smaller transducers around the skull in a helmet-like phased-array system, sufficient amounts of energy can be deposited in the target tissue. Unfortunately, the skull thickness is uneven, causing variable delays of the acoustic waves originating from individual phased array elements. Phase incoherence can be corrected, however, if the skull thickness is known from preoperative X-ray computed tomography scans. In an experimental setup successful focusing through the skull has been achieved and verified by MRI, and this provides the foundation for developing the first human MRI-guided FUS system for brain tumor treatment.

### Conclusion

Clearly, the broad medical community has accepted the role of imaging in both diagnosis and therapy. Increasingly, minimally invasive procedures are viewed favorably and there is a strong demand for their widespread implementation across numerous surgical disciplines. Nowhere is this demand more evident than in neurosurgery where advances in intraoperative MRI and computing technology have marshaled in a new and exciting era in the treatment of brain tumors. We are especially encouraged by the ability of MRI-guided Focused Ultrasound to penetrate the blood brain barrier selectively. This breakthrough technology holds great promise for a host of interventions from vascular occlusion to targeted drug delivery for brain cancer (and other CNS diseases) to gene therapy.

Although radiology has combined imaging with various novel therapeutic methods, the full utilization of advanced imaging technology has not yet been accomplished. The current trend is focused on the creation of *integrated* therapy delivery systems in which advanced imaging modalities are closely linked with high performance computing. Obviously, the operating room of the future will accommodate various instruments, tools, and devices that are attached to the imaging systems and controlled by image-based feedback. We are confident these innovative technologies when applied in an integrated, multimodality imaging environment will produce a range of minimally and non-invasive therapies for the brain and as well as other organs and systems.

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# A PEACEFUL INTERLUDE IN THE COLD WAR

## THE ESTABLISHMENT OF HUNGARIAN STUDIES AT INDIANA UNIVERSITY. A PERSONAL MEMOIR

DENIS SINOR

Indiana University, Bloomington, IN  
USA

The memoir is the history of the Hungarian Chair at Indiana University from 1979 when the Hungarian Academy of Sciences endowed the Chair by the transfer of USD 250,000.

**Keywords:** Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Hungarian Studies at Indiana University

The seemingly innocuous establishment of Hungarian Studies as an academic discipline at Indiana University is quite extraordinary when set against the background of the Cold War and the cultural policies of the Kádár Regime and does deserve a brief description. Since there can be no doubt that I was instrumental in this academic venture, some parts of this essay have an autobiographical character.

It should not be irrelevant to this purpose to note that, though born in Hungary, I never emigrated from that country, had no personal axe to grind against any of the successive regimes, and strictly adhered to the principle of non-participation in any émigré politics. In the 1950s and 1960s towards those who cared for such things my anti-fascist credentials were established by my voluntary service in the French army of De Gaulle and by the fortuitous fact that when in Budapest I stayed with a prominent member of the party, a childhood friend who had the courage to lodge me.

On the academic side my field was, and has been ever since my student years, the study of Central Eurasia, with emphasis on comparative Altaic linguistics and medieval history. My interest in Hungarian studies was secondary though during my years when I was on the Faculty of Oriental Studies at Cambridge University (1948–62) I introduced the teaching of Hungarian and established a Hungarian Tripos. From 1955 to 1956 I reorganized for the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* the abominably inaccurate entries dealing with Hungarian literature, a task which took me to Hungary in search of Hungarian collaborators. The 1956 revolution

did not affect my relations with the country, and the publication in 1958 of my *History of Hungary* (George Allen and Unwin in Britain, Praeger in the USA) received a cautious but well-meaning reception in Hungary. Hungarian scholarly circles, unavoidably linked with politics, sensed that I was politically neutral, and that I understood the delicacy of their situation.

The focus of this writing must now switch from the autobiographical to the general and from the United Kingdom to the United States. In 1956 almost simultaneously Uralic and Altaic Studies were introduced in the shape of a Department at Columbia University and in the form of an Interdepartmental Program at Indiana University. The movers behind these developments were two Hungarian scholars, John Lotz at Columbia, Thomas A. Sebeok at Indiana University. Although the initiative came mostly from Lotz, the two men worked closely together and shared as their common Hungarian scholarly heritage the a priori conviction of the existence of a Uralic and Altaic (or Uralo-Altaic) linguistic family. In the fall of 1958 the National Defense Education Act (NDEA) was enacted by Congress and Lotz took advantage of favorable political winds to convince the Ford Foundation to subsidize under the aegis of the American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS) a Uralic and Altaic Program, an NDEA research project which ran from June 1959 to September 1962 and was subsequently extended to June 1963. Between June 1959 and September 1974 close to \$700,000 – at that time a very substantial sum – was spent on 116 projects carried out by seventy-four principal investigators representing forty-two institutions. Lotz and Sebeok were linguists and through their mother-tongue had a natural link with the Uralic linguistic family. Actually, in his earlier years Lotz did make some fine contributions to Hungarian linguistics. However, neither of them had any connections with Altaic (Turkic, Mongol, Tunguz) studies and there were no available experts to be found in the United States. Yet it was clear that from the American point of view Altaic peoples presented a much greater interest than those speaking a Uralic tongue. Of the fifteen republics constituting the Soviet Union, five were Turkic. There was need for an Altaist.

In letters and during visits in England, Sebeok tried to convince me of the advantages of an academic life in America but I saw no reason to exchange my post in arguably the best university in the world for that in a lesser university located in a land just recovering from McCarthyism. However, I had a sabbatical coming up and accepted a one-semester visiting professorship at Indiana University. Within a few months I realized that a stay in that university would give me more personal satisfaction than I could ever expect in Cambridge and decided to stay.

It should be emphasized that I intended and was expected to develop the Altaic side of the Uralic and Altaic Program, of which I became the chairman in the fall of 1963, and which I transformed into a fully-fledged university department in 1966. But my side-interest in things Hungarian remained and received unex-



pected encouragement in the very dynamic atmosphere then prevailing at Indiana University. I was surprised to note that my *History of Hungary* has been known to a number of people and Robert F. Byrnes, Professor of History and then Chairman of the Russian and East European Institute suggested that I offer, for the Department of History, a course on Hungarian history. This I did in the spring semester of 1963, i.e., barely a year after my arrival at Indiana University. It was a 400-level course called Hungarian History and Civilization until 1526. In the spring of 1964 it was followed by Hungarian History and Civilization since 1526, and the following spring came Hungary in the 20th century. Interrupted only by my sabbatical or other absences, this three-year circle continued until the welcome arrival of György Ránki. Enrollments were constantly in the upper-teens.

It was quite interesting to observe the various reactions with which the inhabitants of the academic frog-pond reacted to this innovation. The College of Arts and Sciences and the Department of History rather welcomed this extension of their offering, all the more because they did not have to pay for it. I did not ask and did not receive any compensation for this additional teaching-load. The two persons with whom I had most to do (should I say: I had to contend with?) were Byrnes and Sebeok. The first was almost pathologically anti-communist but his feelings were translated into an activity to widen American knowledge of any aspect of the communist world. He welcomed any attempt to increase contacts with the Soviet Union and its satellites and was, to the best of my knowledge, instrumental in the creation of the International Research and Exchange Board (IREX). He was an empire builder and his dynamism in later years led to some confrontations between us. Byrnes liked the idea of being able to list these courses among those offered by the Russian and East European Institute. As for Sebeok, his hostility towards my attempt to move Hungarian studies beyond the teaching of the language was vigorous and to me quite surprising. To speculate on his motives would be an idle exercise.

Simultaneously with these area courses, the teaching of Hungarian – the roots of which went back at Indiana University to WW II – continued. The teachers were Hungarian émigrés of much good will but uncertain competence. In September 1963, to my great surprise, Professor László Országh of Debrecen University came to visit me at Indiana University. I had known him since my school days and during the difficult years of the 1950s and beyond we kept in touch in so far that I called on him whenever I was in Budapest. During the darkest years of the Rákosi era, when the teaching of English was suspended at the Hungarian universities, he worked at the Institute of Linguistics of the Hungarian Academy but now he could again teach his subject in Debrecen. He suggested sending one of his students to Bloomington to teach Hungarian and, what from his point of view was more important, to improve his English and get acquainted with the United States and the American way of life. He was interested in grooming his successors. Of course I

enthusiastically embraced the idea. By that time my credentials in Hungary were fairly well established, to the extent that the competent authorities would allow a young man to come to an American university – as long as it was Indiana University. There were difficulties both in Hungary and at my university; the first induced by the general reluctance of overcautious bureaucrats, the second by internal power struggles within my university. Yet they were overcome, and the first Hungarian teaching associate Tamás Doszkocs arrived in the fall of 1964. He was followed, again on Ország's recommendation, by Zsolt Virágos. Since then and until now, year after year, with no interruption, young men or women, attached to a Hungarian university, have come to teach Hungarian and to learn about America. In the "bad years" when temptation was still great to become a dissident, not one defected and several made good use of this experience in order to further a nice career.

A good library is the prerequisite of serious research and ever since my arrival at Indiana University I have tried to build up the material relevant to the department. *Hungarica* published outside of Hungary could be obtained through regular commercial channels; the procurement of books published in Hungary, however, posed quite a challenge. The situation changed dramatically with a letter dated March 7, 1974 in which Dr. József Vekerdi, Head of the Department of International Exchange Service of the Országos Széchényi Könyvtár, offered a very generous exchange system, which in fact was a rather one-sided affair. He made it clear that he expected no *quid pro quo* arrangement and his aim was to help the "valuable activities" of our Department of Uralic and Altaic Studies. Vekerdi asked only for books or leaflets of direct Hungarian interest published or circulated in the United States, and over the years he sent to Indiana University hundreds of volumes. The mechanism of our cooperation was quite simple. Every month I received the periodical *Magyar Könyvvilág* with its supplement *A hónap könyvei*, a complete list of the books published in Hungary during the course of the previous month. My task was simple: ticking off – with some self-restraint – all the books I thought we should have. They would be sent in due course. The first batch of thirty-eight books came on December 18, 1974 followed by a steady stream over more than twenty years. On May 1, 1995 Vekerdi informed me that as a result of "political cleansing" (*politikai tisztogatások*) he had been relieved of his post and sent into retirement. Fortunately by that time steady cooperation had been established between the Országos Széchényi Könyvtár and Indiana University's main library.

Over the years I regularly organized at Indiana University symposia around Hungarian topics, meetings attended also by scholars coming from Hungary. But the effects of such gatherings were by definition ephemeral, and I decided to attempt to make Hungarian studies a permanent feature of the curriculum. I also had in mind the lessons learned in Cambridge where, following my departure, Hun-

garian studies disappeared. In the 1970s I survived several heart-attacks and felt a pressing need to act decisively. My idea was to create an endowed chair for Hungarian studies, the only administrative solution to ensure relevant teaching even following my death. It would be protected from the snap-decisions made by ever-changing departmental chairmen or ephemeral deans. I brought up the subject at several of my visits to Hungary, mainly at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and with the leadership of the Magyarok Világszövetsége (World Federation of Hungarians) a para-governmental organization with which I had excellent relations.

On Easter Sunday of 1977 I had the pleasure of having as my guests Béla Köpeczi then Secretary-General of the Academy, and his wife. I had high esteem for Köpeczi's non-doctrinaire realism, and his skills in the "art of the possible." We talked about the desirability of launching a periodical *Hungarian Studies* – as the alert reader may notice: a project on which we followed up successfully – and also of the possibility of creating at Indiana University an Endowed Chair in Hungarian Studies, to function within my Department of Uralic and Altaic Studies. While welcoming the idea, Köpeczi thought it improbable that in the then prevailing political climate permission could be obtained to launch such a project.

Time passed and on June 11, 1978 I attended a reception given by John Ryan, President of Indiana University in honor of some deans of several Yugoslav universities. Perhaps it was not the most tactful thing to do but I asked him why does he bother with Yugoslav affairs instead of doing something big for Hungarian Studies at Indiana University, more specifically creating an endowed Chair for Hungarian Studies. Ryan, uncommonly endowed with the great American quality of making quick decisions, immediately replied that if I can secure Hungarian funding for such a project, he was ready to match whatever the Hungarians would give. Over the years I learned that Ryan was a man of his word, so I was very much encouraged by this unexpected promise and found myself reminded of the biblical injunction, "Ask, and ye shall be given."

It so happened that a few days later, at a reception given at the Hungarian Embassy in Washington D.C., I brought up the matter with Ambassador Esztergályos, who did not seem to comprehend what it was all about. I had a different reception in Budapest where – coming from Taiwan – I arrived on September 18 to participate in a number of meetings with the leadership of the aforementioned Magyarok Világszövetsége and the academy, which had just elected me to an honorary membership. I pushed hard on the matter of the Hungarian Chair, met with much sympathy, but never expected what was to happen. On September 27 I had lunch with Ferenc Márta, then Secretary General of the Academy, who informed me that at 3 p.m. of that same day György Aczél was to receive me in his office in the Parliament building. This was exciting news.

At that time Aczél was the Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers but more importantly a member of the Politburo and even more importantly, from the mid-1960s to the mid-1980s, the recognized arbiter, the supreme authority over all aspects of Hungary's cultural life. A very talkative man, he received me most graciously, was well informed about my own and Indiana University's Hungarian-related activities and expressed the hope that I was fully satisfied by the effective and sympathetic help we had received from Hungary. He was aware of the presence at Indiana University of Hungarian Teaching Associates and the important shipment of books we were receiving. What else could I want? Having expressed my gratitude for all the help received, I quite bluntly stated that what we needed was an endowed chair, and told him about Ryan's commitment. I thought I had made a good case for the project but Aczél showed no reaction to my proposal. Nevertheless, within days it appeared that he had given the green light to the project. Later I thought that this conversation was the decisive factor in convincing Aczél. But in the summer of 2004 my old friend, the distinguished journalist Miklós Szántó, very well informed on Communist Party matters, revealed to me that by the time I talked to Aczél the subject of the Hungarian Chair at Indiana University had already cleared the Politburo and my invitation to meet with him was considered but the last step before final approval was given to the academy to proceed with the project.

A couple of months later, to be precise on November 21, 1978, under the auspices of the State Department, a small Hungarian delegation arrived in Bloomington. It included András Knopp, then Deputy Minister of Public Instruction, accompanied by the Cultural Attache of the Hungarian Embassy and, since Knopp's English was fluent, by a totally superfluous interpreter. I had never met Knopp and, as I was to discover later, he had the reputation of a rather rigid, doctrinaire *apparatchik* of very few words, a very close collaborator of Aczél in the Party. The date of his arrival was inauspicious, since the 23<sup>rd</sup> was Thanksgiving Day and the campus was emptied of faculty, administrators, and students. The conversation at a hastily arranged lunch given by the Dean for International Affairs turned around such mundane topics as the weather, Knopp's length of stay in the US, compliments on the fluency of his English, and the date of his departure which, we learned, was set for the 25<sup>th</sup>. So it was clear, he was to stay in Bloomington over Thanksgiving, and there was but one possible solution: invite him and his companions to my home for dinner. Just before we sat down at the table, quite by chance, it came to light that Knopp had come to Bloomington on Aczél's instructions to finalize (!) the modalities connected with the Hungarian Chair. It was then, for the first time, that I had any positive indication of Aczél's consent. Knopp had expected me to bring up the matter and interpreted my silence as a sign that Indiana University had lost interest in the project. He was ready to return home empty-handed. This was a narrow escape! After some hesitation I de-

cided to go beyond the limits of proper behavior and in the afternoon of Thanksgiving Day I called Ryan at his home. Luckily, I was able to reach him; and with great graciousness he offered a meeting for the next afternoon. At 1 p.m. on the day following Thanksgiving, Knopp and I called on Ryan in his home. Inept as his initial approach may have been, when faced with Ryan Knopp proved to be a most efficient, courteous negotiator. It took less than two hours to iron out the difficulties that existed, and Ryan asked me to prepare a memorandum summarizing the results of their negotiations. It was planned that we should sign the agreement sometime in the following summer.

And so it came to pass that Ryan traveled to Budapest and on the 15th of June 1979, in the building of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, he, representing Indiana University, and Köpeczi representing the academy signed an agreement whereby the academy would endow a Chair of Hungarian Studies at Indiana University by the transfer of \$250,000. I cannot speak about the feelings of the signatories or of those others who witnessed the act. I can speak for myself. I felt a deep sense of satisfaction and was greatly amused that I succeeded in this undertaking, that I pulled it off; indeed, for a very noble cause. Because here we were, in the middle of the Cold War, with the Berlin Wall still standing, and I could cajole a Communist Government (with modest reserves in hard currency) to authorize its academy to send this – at that time substantial sum – to an American university, with no strings attached, and that the President of Indiana University had the political wisdom and courage to accept such an endowment. Of course on a world-scale the act barely moved an atom, but now, with all the communist states gone, this agreement will remain *sui generis*.

I would like to call particular attention to following points in the agreement: 1. the Chair of Hungarian Studies will function within the Department of Uralic and Altaic Studies (i.e., not in the Russian and East European Institute); 2. the appointment will follow the procedure normal at Indiana University in the case of senior faculty members (i.e., he or she will not be chosen by the Academy); 3. the search committee will have five members, two of whom will be appointed by Indiana University, two by the Hungarian Academy, the chairman of the Department of Uralic and Altaic Studies being ex officio member of the Committee; 4. every five years Indiana University will review the activity of the Chair, and if there is mutual agreement that the chair should cease, then Indiana University Foundation will refund the endowment to the Academy. For the hard-currency strapped Hungary one quarter of a million of dollars was a big sum and on the Hungarian side one could sense some anxiety at the thought of transferring this money to Indiana University for a project that may peter out within a few years. Showing his confidence in the project, Ryan cut the Gordian knot by suggesting that “if there is mutual agreement on the point that the Chair should cease” the Indiana University Foundation (in charge of handling the Endowment) will refund the money.

The post of the Professor of Hungarian Studies was duly advertised in the appropriate media and generated a surprising number of enquiries bordering on the ridiculous. Most applicants thought that their Hungarian birth alone would qualify. To me it was clear from the outset that only a first-rate Hungarian scholar would be qualified for this professorship and, a realist, I also knew that the academy would not consent to the appointment of a scholar not residing in the country. The applications generated by the advertisement solved the problem. No serious American scholar answered the advertisement. As for the choice of a Hungarian scholar, I set my aim high, I thought of György Ránki, then Deputy-Director of the Institute of History of the academy, an economic historian of world-wide repute. I talked to him about my idea, which he welcomed with some enthusiasm though he felt that it would be difficult to obtain the consent of the powers that be. In 1979 travel from Hungary abroad needed special permissions, and of course Ránki occupied an important position, which he could not simply leave for possibly three years. I first mentioned my idea to Márta who thought it was a good one but difficult to realize because of Ránki's position. Knopp was categorical: "I would not let him go," he said and added, "But this is none of my business." Finally I broached the subject also with the supreme arbiter Aczél, who dismissed it out of hand. Ránki was far too important. "We [possibly the Party] have other plans for him. He must stay at his post."

Several colleagues suggested the historian Péter Hanák, a respected scholar. I visited him in his home and – compared with Ránki's boundless enthusiasm – found him lukewarm to the idea of leaving for Indiana University. His appointment, so I thought, would be a *pis aller*. On October 10, 1979 Ránki wrote me a short letter to the effect that Köpeczi quite bluntly opposed his candidacy for the Hungarian Chair and proposed Hanák. Ránki added that he cannot and would not fight this decision, all the more because he respected Hanák who was also a good friend. Well, I thought, that was it – and it could have been worse. What happened in the arcane political world of Hungarian academe I cannot tell, but in a letter written on December 6 Ránki informed me that because of an "unlucky developments" [*nem szerencsés események folytán*] the powers [*a Főnökség*] no longer wished to send Hanák and wanted him, Ránki, to come. With touching modesty he added that he hoped that I would not view this decision as a bad one. Bad? I could have jumped with joy. I thought that was the end of the story and we would have smooth sailing. I was wrong.

At the department faculty meeting of February 1, 1980 I could announce the good news, apparently well received by my colleagues, including Tom Sebeok, who, so he said, welcomed this development, all the more since he was acquainted with Ránki. This did not prevent him signing and gathering three more signatures to a letter sent to John Ryan protesting such "communist" presence on campus.

Ryan was furious but ignored the protest. I also had a visit from a good friend from the F.B.I., a mere formality, since he had talked to Ryan before seeing me.

On February 14 Ránki came to Indiana University to discuss the details, saw Ryan, and began planning his tenure. As for myself, on April 24, with a sigh of relief, I gave the last lecture of my life on Hungarian history. I had an enrollment of thirty-four. Beginning with the fall semester of 1980 the task of teaching Hungarian history was shouldered by Ránki.

This is not the place to praise Ránki as a historian, his reputation has been firmly established and remains untarnished to this day. What surprised even me – who knew him well – was his charm. He was modest, soft-spoken, crystal-clear in his statements and with much goodwill toward all. A survivor of Auschwitz, whereto he was deported as a child, he bore no grudge against the Germans or, I might say, against anyone. He was a gracious host, greatly helped by his wife Erzsi. They entertained with cheerful elegance in a lovely, furnished apartment located at the top-floor of a dormitory and put at the disposal of the Hungarian Chair by a most forthcoming administration.

On April 10, 1981 on the occasion of a visit in Bloomington by Béla Köpeczi a memorandum was signed by him and by John Ryan amending Item 6 of the original 1979 agreement to the effect that, even if I am no longer Chairman of the Uralic and Altaic Department, I should remain ex-officio chairman of the search committee [of the Hungarian Chair] and manager of the special account of the Chair. It will be noted that no date was given for my relinquishing this function. The aim was to ensure my continuing influence even when no longer chairman of the department, a function I was due to relinquish a few months later.

According to paragraph 11 of the 1979 agreement, the activity of the chair was to be reviewed every five years. For reasons no longer clear, the review took place belatedly, in the spring of 1986. A memorandum signed on May 16, 1986 by John Ryan and Kálmán Kulcsár, then Deputy Secretary General of the Academy, concluded that, “It is therefore the wish of both signatory parties that the present activities of the Chair be allowed to continue essentially on the lines hitherto followed...”

It was clear from the outset that a scholar of Ránki's stature, firmly linked to his many activities in Hungary, could not spend successive academic years away from his permanent position. Until his unexpected and much lamented death in Budapest on February 19, 1988, Ránki was present on campus for at least one semester each academic year and he was instrumental in finding someone who, in his absence from Indiana University could ensure the teaching of *Hungarica*. In the Spring of 1986 Kálmán Kulcsár, who 1988–90 was to become Minister of Justice and played a key-role in the judicial foundation of the new regime, taught at Indiana University; and in the spring of 1987 Mihály Szegedy-Maszák filled in for

Ránki. That same Spring my wife Jean and I had the pleasure to have as our houseguest Aczél, who wanted to see his “baby,” namely the Hungarian Chair.

John Ryan resigned from the presidency of Indiana University in the summer of 1987. This act created severe problems for the Hungarian Chair. They are reflected in a *Memorandum* dated March 20, 1991 signed by Vice President Kenneth R. R. Gros Louis on behalf of Indiana University and Béla G. Németh, then Chairman of the First Section for the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. This document, a product of the second Quinquennial review of the Chair, noted:

The death of Professor Ránki was not the only blow the Chair was to receive. From the outset of the Chair's operation it was clear that the moneys provided by the original endowment and the matching funds the University was bound to provide would not suffice for the support of all the activities deemed desirable. The resignation in the summer of 1987 of President Ryan, instrumental in the creation of the Chair, created serious financial problems since it was his wont to use discretionary funds to complement the sums received under the terms of the original agreement. In the present academic year, in great part thanks to the efforts of Professor Alex Rabinovitch, Dean of International Programs ... the College of Arts and Sciences made a substantial contribution to the funding of the Chair activities.

“Ideally,” so the *Memorandum* continues, “Professor Szegedy-Maszák should have received a permanent appointment in the Department of Uralic and Altaic Studies.” I could not agree more, but the days of my chairmanship had long past, and my successor lacked the know-how to obtain the appointment. Luckily, the Department of Comparative Literature came to the rescue and offered Szegedy-Maszák a permanent appointment, which, to cite again the *Memorandum*, “assures the permanency so much needed for the flourishing of Hungarian Studies.” This arrangement still obtains and Szegedy-Maszák usually spends one semester at Indiana University whereas in the other semester another Hungarian scholar carries the burden of teaching matters Hungarian either alone or, when Szegedy-Maszák is present for the whole academic year, jointly with him. Since Ránki's death, in an informal arrangement, the heavy burden to find a suitable academic to fill the Hungarian Chair year after year has been shouldered with great expertise and tact by Professor Szegedy-Maszák. Without his knowledge of the Hungarian scholarly scene and his devotion to this thankless task the Chair could not have functioned.

Over the years the stipulation of the memorandum of April 10, 1981 that I remain – *sine die* and *ex officio* – the manager of the special account of the Chair was conveniently forgotten, and I took care not to take up the matter with the administration, which to this day treats me with elegance and generosity. Another silent and welcome change was the linking of Ránki's name to the Chair. It happened



gradually in connection with the yearly conferences, which – I cannot now recall when for the first time – were announced as organized by “The György Ránki Hungarian Chair.”

The tremendous political changes that in the late 1980s and early 1990s occurred in Hungary had no noticeable effect on the activities of the Hungarian Chair. There was no witch-hunt in the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, which weathered the changes with skill and dignity. Cooperation between the Academy and Indiana University remained harmonious, and I can recall but one, passing, unpleasantness.

In December 1993 Pál Tar, then Hungarian Ambassador in Washington, paid a visit to Indiana University. He was the first such official of the new regime to come to Bloomington and I was pleased with the prospect. The previous spring the two of us had met in Sarasota, Florida at a symposium on some Hungarian topic and, at his request, on April 6 I provided him with a “Short Conspectus” on the past of Hungarian Studies at Indiana University. During his visit to Indiana University Tar turned out to be an obnoxious, tactless person, a political and diplomatic nouveau riche, who quite mistakenly thought that the Hungarian Ambassador had a say in matters pertaining to the Hungarian Chair. One of his pet ideas was my removal from anything connected with the Chair. Patrick O’Meara, Dean of International Affairs – into whose competent and sympathetic hands in the meanwhile the task of watching over the Hungarian Chair shifted – had some difficulty in clarifying the situation. In view of such attempted interference I thought it advisable to fly to Budapest to take up matters at the Academy. I did so in January 1994 and talked about Tar to Domokos Kosáry, then president of the Academy and fellow historian. Kosáry was not a man to mince his words, and I wonder whether he dared to use the same expressions in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as he did with me in protesting against any interference into the affairs that he rightly thought, concerned only the Academy and Indiana University. Be that as it may, no further attempt was made by successive ambassadors to follow in Tar’s misplaced footsteps, and relations between the embassy in Washington and the Hungarian Chair have remained, to this day, excellent.

With the Tar episode my interventions in the destinies of, let me call it, “The György Ránki Hungarian Chair” have ended. The Cold War has become a distant memory but the good work continues. Indiana University remains the only American university, and outside Hungary one of the very few in the world, with serious and continuous undergraduate and graduate programs in Hungarian Studies. It is not the aim of this essay to sketch the activities of the Hungarian Chair in the years that followed the change in Hungary’s political regime.



# ON THE INFORMATION STRUCTURE OF THE HUNGARIAN SENTENCE

FERENC KIEFER

Research Institute for Linguistics, Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Budapest<sup>1</sup>  
Hungary

Traditionally, information structure in Hungarian has always been considered to be identical to topic-comment structure, which has been defined partly in syntactico-semantic and partly in pragmatic terms. The present paper argues in favor of the postulation of two independent levels, one defined in terms of logical subject and logical predicate, the other in terms of topic and comment. The paper is going to show that a number of phenomena which pose problems for the traditional account can easily be explained on the two-level approach.

**Keywords:** information structure, topic-comment, logical subject-logical predicate, word order

## 1. The Notion of Information Structure

The information structure of the sentence is normally defined as the way in which the information contained in the sentence is presented. “The information structure of a sentence is the formal expression of the pragmatic structuring of a proposition in a discourse” (Lambrecht 1994: 6). Topic and focus are listed among the most important categories of information structure, “which have to do with a speaker’s assessment of the relative predictability vs. unpredictability of the relations between propositions and their elements in given discourse situations” (ibid.). More precisely, “a referent is interpreted as the topic of a proposition if in a given situation the proposition is construed as being about this referent, i.e. as expressing information which is relevant to and which increases the addressee’s knowledge of this referent” (Lambrecht 1994: 131). Correspondingly, the comment is what is said about this referent and expresses new information. Cf. (1)(a)–(b).

- (1) (a) What did the children do next? The children went to SCHOOL.  
(b) Who went to school? The CHILDREN went to school.

The sentence (1)(a) is about the children, i.e., the noun phrase *the children* is the topic of the sentence and the comment is that *they went to school*. At the same time, the topic is contextually bound by the preceding sentence. The sentence (1)(b), on the other hand, is about *going to school*, which is the topic, and it is asserted that this concerns *the children*, which constitutes the comment. For simplicity's sake let us dub this way of looking at information structure, which has been advocated by many scholars since the early 70s approach A.<sup>2</sup> It should also be noted that Lambrecht did not have anything to say about the role of grammatical subject and grammatical predicate. So far so good.

However, the notions of topic and comment have been known in the literature since they were introduced by Prague School scholars who have also been using the notion of "aboutness" for the definition of topic but in contradistinction to Lambrecht they have also pointed out that "topic-comment-articulation" is autonomous in the sense that it cannot be derived from the distinction between 'given' (i.e., known from the preceding context or situation) and 'new'.<sup>3</sup> Notice that the preceding context does not always determine uniquely the choice of topic and comment, as shown by the examples (2)(a)–(c) (Sgall et al. 1973).

- (2) (a) On Christmas Eve we expected our RELATIVES.  
 (b) Uncle Fred came FIRST.  
 (c) First came Uncle FRED.

Here one either speaks about Uncle Fred and states when he came, or one speaks about the one who came first, and states who he was.

Moreover, in some cases the whole sentence may represent new information yet the sentence does assert something about the referent of the subject noun phrase.

- (3) (a) What happened?  
 (b) Mary broke her leg.

No doubt, in a certain sense of "aboutness" the sentence (3)(b) is about Mary. That is, though the noun phrase *Mary* is not contextually bound, sentence (3)(b) asserts something about Mary, hence it must be the topic of the sentence. The two layers of information structure, i.e., topic-comment and given-news, however, have never been distinguished systematically. Let us dub the Praguian approach, approach B.

We thus seem to have two different approaches, A and B, to topic-comment-articulation. On the approach A,<sup>4</sup> the topic represents at the same time given information (it is contextually bound) and the referent about which something is asserted. On the approach B, advocated by Prague school scholars,<sup>5</sup> the two layers, given information and aboutness are kept apart, which may but need not coincide.

In the present paper we are going to argue that approach B, to be elaborated in more detail in Section 3 below, is more adequate for the description of Hungarian sentence structure than approach A.

## 2. Word Order in Hungarian

The relatively free word order in Hungarian has always been a great challenge to grammarians. Traditionally, following the teachings of classical grammars, Hungarian sentences have been analyzed in terms of grammatical subject and grammatical predicate, the notion of grammatical subject being defined in terms of aboutness. The typical questions asked in school grammars have been 'About what do we assert something?' and 'What do we assert?', the first question being used to identify the grammatical subject and the second the grammatical predicate (in declarative sentences). Furthermore, it is taken for granted that the subject noun phrase is always in the nominative. It is easy to see, however, that the two aspects of subjecthood are incompatible. Consider<sup>6</sup>

- (4) (a) *Jánost elütötte a vonat.*  
 John-acc over-ran the train  
 'John was run over by the train'  
 (b) *Jánosnak tetszik Éva.*  
 John-dat likes Eve  
 'John likes Eve'

It is quite evident that sentence (4)(a) is about *Jánost* 'John-acc' in spite of the fact that it is in the accusative case, and it is asserted about John that he was run over by the train; the subject noun phrase of the sentence is *a vonat* 'the train'. Similarly, the sentence (4)(b) is about *Jánosnak* 'John-dat' in spite of the fact that it is in the dative case, and it is asserted about John that he likes Eve; the subject noun phrase is *Éva* 'Eve'.

From the above observations we may conclude that (i) aboutness cannot be a defining property of subjecthood; more importantly, (ii) word order is not defined by the grammatical subject – grammatical predicate articulation, since the grammatical subject has no fixed position (unlike in English or French), it may occupy various positions in the sentence and it may also occur in postverbal position.

The 19th century Hungarian linguist Sámuel Brassai (1789–1889) was the first to recognize the difference between word order rules in Hungarian and Indoeuropean languages.<sup>7</sup> At the same time, he found that both the fixed and the free word order languages display a sentence structure which begins with one or more complements carrying information already known. These complements "practically lay a basis for the meaning of the sentence in the listener's mind, i.e.,

they are calling attention, and pointing forward, connecting the mental activity of the listener with that of the speaker” (Brassai 1860: 341).<sup>8</sup> He refers to this initial part of the sentence as ‘subject in a different sense’ (1852), ‘inchoativum’ (1860, 1863–1865), or ‘introduction’ (1874), or ‘preparatory part’ (1885). The second part of the sentence, including the verb, is the ‘predicate’ (1852), or ‘bulk’ (‘mondatzöm’, 1860, 1863–1865), or ‘message’ (1874), or ‘principal part’ (1885). The function of this second part is “the communication of an action, or a circumstance of an action that the speaker supposes to be unknown to the listener” (Brassai 1874: 72). To return to our examples in (4)(a)–(b), the preparatory part of the sentence (4)(a) is *Jánost* ‘John-acc’ and the principal part *elütötte a vonat* ‘was run over by the train’, the preparatory part of the sentence (4)(b) is *Jánosnak* ‘John-dat’ and the principal part *tetszik Éva* ‘likes Eve’. It can easily be seen that the preparatory part of the sentence is identical to what we called topic and the principal part of the sentence to what was termed comment in the previous section. In what follows we will therefore use the well-known terms topic and comment instead of Brassai’s slightly idiosyncratic terms.<sup>9</sup>

Brassai was thus first in recognizing that Hungarian word order is determined by topic-comment rather than by grammatical subject-grammatical predicate articulation.<sup>10</sup> Brassai also emphasized that in Hungarian any kind of complement can serve as topic (in contrast to English or French)<sup>11</sup> and that the topic may contain more than one complement (in contrast to German). Furthermore, not all sentences have a topic-comment articulation, the topic may remain implicit. Consider

- (5) (a) *Marit Péter tegnap moziba vitte.*  
 Mary-acc Peter yesterday cinema-to took  
 ‘Yesterday Peter took Mary to the cinema’  
 (b) *Megjöttek.*  
 arrived-they  
 ‘They arrived’

In (5)(a) the topic contains both *Marit* and *Péter*, and in (5)(b) the topic is left implicit, which is only possible if both the speaker and the addressee know about whom or about what the predicate ‘arrived’ is asserted.

Brassai made some further important observations concerning Hungarian sentence structure, which should not be left unmentioned. First, he emphasized the important role of stress in identifying the comment: the first element of the comment carries the strongest stress in the sentence. In contemporary research, too, it is generally assumed that one way to determine the boundary between topic and comment is stress: the first obligatory full stress marks the first element of the comment. Consider

- (6) (a) Péter sokszor járt Párizsban.  
 Peter often was Paris-in  
 'Peter has often been in Paris'  
 (b) Péter "Annával találkozott Párizsban.  
 Peter Ann-with met Paris-in  
 'Peter met ANN in Paris', 'It was Ann that Peter met in Paris'

This observation is still used as one of the major tests to distinguish the two parts of the sentence.

Another important observation made by Brassai concerned the so-called question test, which we have already made use of in the examples (1)(a)-(b). According to Brassai in order to distinguish between 'given' and 'new' information, one has to find out to what kind of question the sentence can be considered to be an adequate answer to. The noun phrase which is the common part of the question and the corresponding answer is the topic of the sentence.<sup>12</sup> Here are some more examples:

- (7) (a) A könyvet kinek adtad oda? – A könyvet PÉTERNEK adtam oda.  
 the book-acc whom-to gave – I the book-acc Peter-dat gave-I  
 'Whom did you give the book?' I gave Peter the book.  
 (b) Hol találkoztál Annával? – Annával a PARKBAN találkoztam.  
 where met-you Ann-with – Ann-with the park-in met-I  
 'Where did you meet Ann?' 'I met Ann in the park'

According to the question test in (7)(a) the topic is *a könyvet* 'the book-acc' and in (7)(b) *Annával* 'Ann-with', according to the test based on stress, the first element of the comment is *Péternek* 'Peter-dat' in (7)(a) and *a parkban* 'the park-in' in (7)(b). This conclusion would also be in full accordance with most present-day work on Hungarian syntax.

Let us summarize Brassai's main merits: (i) Brassai argued convincingly that the word order rules in Hungarian cannot be formulated in terms of grammatical subject – grammatical predicate, word order is determined by topic-comment articulation; (ii) the topic can be identified by means of the question test (the common element of the question and the corresponding answer belong to the topic); (iii) the boundary between topic and comment is determined by stress: the first stressed element in the sentence is the first element of the comment;<sup>13</sup> (iv) typically, the topic occupies the sentence-initial position and it is followed by the comment. However, Brassai does not make any distinction between topic, i.e., 'the subject in a different sense' and the thing which is known. In fact, he did not realize that (ii) and (iii) define two different things: the question test identifies whatever is contextually bound and the first obligatory full stress defines the boundary between the 'preparatory part' and the 'principal part' of the sentence. Consequently, Brassai is an early representative of approach A.

In what follows I am going to show that approach A fails to account for a number of phenomena and that approach B, which makes a distinction between given-new, on the one hand, and logical subject-logical predicate, on the other, must be favored over approach A.

### 3. Some Problems with Approach A

#### 3.1. Non-specific Referring Expressions?

The indefinite pronouns *valaki* 'somebody' and *valami* 'something' cannot be contextually bound in the sentences (8)(a)-(b).

- (8) (a) *Valaki kopogott az ajtón.*  
           somebody knocked the door-at  
           'Somebody was knocking at the door'
- (b) *Valami leesett a tetőről.*  
           something fell the roof-from  
           'Something fell from the roof'

These sentences do not induce any existential presupposition either, they rather assert the existence of somebody or something.<sup>14</sup> There is thus no way to interpret *valaki* 'somebody' in (8)(a) and *valami* 'something' in (8)(b) as topic: neither one is a referring expression (a specific noun phrase) and neither one is contextually bound. But both sentences (8)(a) and (b) can be answers to the question 'What happened?'. That is, in both cases the whole sentence represents new information.<sup>15</sup> At the same time, in (8)(a) it is asserted that there was somebody who was knocking at the door, and similarly in (8)(b) it is asserted that there was something that fell down from the roof.<sup>16</sup>

#### 3.2. Two Different Topicless Sentences?

Notice that the question 'What happened?' can often be answered in two different ways, e.g.<sup>17</sup>

- (9) (a) *Bodri megharapta Marit.*  
           Bodri bit Mary-acc  
           'Bodri bit Mary'
- (b) *Marit megharapta Bodri.*  
           Mary-acc bit Bodri  
           'Mary was bitten by Bodri'



If the sentences (9)(a)-(b) are considered answers to the question 'What happened?', they are both topicless. Nevertheless the sentence (9)(a) is an assertion about *Bodri* and (9)(b) an assertion about *Marit*. Consequently, the structure of the assertion (what is asserted about what) is independent of topic-comment articulation.

### 3.3. 'Truncated' Topics?

Sometimes only a fraction of a noun phrase may belong to the topic. This has to do with the fact that only specific noun phrases may be fully contextually bound. In the sentence (10) the noun phrase *valamelyik gyerek* 'one of the children' is non-specific and can never be fully contextually bound hence it cannot function as a topic.<sup>18</sup>

- (10) Valamelyik gyerek minden feladatot megoldott.  
       one (of them) child all problem-acc solved  
       'One of the children solved all the problems'

Yet sentence (10) asserts about one of the children that it solved the problem. On the other hand, if a set of children is contextually given, then, *gyerek* 'child', which is the head noun of the subject noun phrase, is contextually bound, and the sentence can be paraphrased as 'From among the children one solved all the problems'. In other words, in that case the topic of (10) is *gyerek* 'child' but not *valamelyik gyerek* 'one of the children'. Once again, the two articulations are different.

### 3.4. The Problem of Quantified Noun Phrases<sup>19</sup>

Consider the following sentences:<sup>20</sup>

- (11) (a) Sok kutya három járókelőt is megharapott.  
       many dog three passer-by-acc even bit  
       'Many dogs bit even three passers-by'  
       (b) "Sok kutya megharapta a három járókelőt.  
       many dog bit the three passer-by-acc.  
       'Many dogs bit the three passers-by'

In (11)(a) the comment begins with *három* 'three' since it carries the first obligatory full stress. In (11)(b), on the other hand, it is the first element of the sentence that carries the heaviest stress, consequently the whole sentence must be consid-

ered comment. Notice, however, that both sentences assert something about *sok kutya* 'many dogs'.

The above examples may suffice to show that aboutness in the sense of being an assertion about a referent and aboutness in the sense of contextual boundedness are two different things. Let us introduce the term 'logical subject' for the NP about which something is asserted and the term 'logical predicate' for what is asserted about that NP. We will keep the traditional terms 'topic' and 'comment' to denote 'given' and 'new', i.e., the pragmatic articulation of the sentence. The logical subject need not be known from the discourse context but if a full NP is the topic, it is at the same time the logical subject. To return to our examples, it can easily be seen that in terms of the above distinction sentences (8)(a)-(b) are topicless but both have a logical subject. In the given context sentences (9)(a)-(b), which are semantically (truth-functionally) equivalent are topicless, too, but they have two different logical subject-logical predicate articulations. The sentence (10) is not topicless and though the full noun phrase *valamelyik gyerek* 'one of the children' is the logical subject, only *gyerek* 'child' may belong to the topic. In the sentence (11)(a) *sok kutya* 'many dogs' can be both logical subject and topic, whereas in (11)(b) it cannot be the topic though it is the logical subject. It can thus be claimed that syntactic structure in Hungarian (including word order) is based on logical subject-logical predicate and not on topic-comment articulation, the latter determines the information structure of the sentence in discourse. In sum, then, by postulating two different levels, a syntactico-semantic and a pragmatic one, we arrive at a more adequate analysis of Hungarian sentences, hence approach B is to be favored over approach A.

There are also sentences in Hungarian which evidently are topicless and at the same time may be analyzed as lacking a logical subject. Sentences with the order verb-subject (VS) all belong here. Such sentences are used to report events and are often referred to as 'event reporting sentences'.<sup>21</sup> Consider

- (12) (a) *Megérkezett a postás.*  
           arrived        the postman  
           'The postman arrived'  
       (b) *Kitört a háború.*  
           broke out the war  
           'The war broke out'

The sentence (12)(a) is not an assertion about the postman, nor is (12)(b) an assertion about the war. Moreover, everything contained in (12)(a)-(b) is new information. Consequently, these sentences have neither a logical subject nor a topic. They are asserted about a situation, which – in a somewhat metaphorical sense – can also be considered the logical subject of the assertion.<sup>22</sup>

To summarize, then, out of the four logical possibilities: (a) an NP is logical subject but not topic, (b) an NP is both logical subject and topic, (c) an NP is neither logical subject nor topic, (d) an NP is topic but not logical subject; for obvious reasons only the last one is excluded.

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### Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Benczúr utca 33, H-1068 Budapest, Hungary. E-mail: kiefer@nytud.hu, fax: (36-1)-322 9297.
- <sup>2</sup> The notion of topic-comment articulation (and also that of functional sentence perspective) was introduced into Anglo-American linguistics by Susumo Kuno in Kuno 1972.
- <sup>3</sup> Lambrecht does, of course, refer to the work of Prague School linguists, however, without paying attention to the twofold distinction topic-comment and given-new.
- <sup>4</sup> Represented also by Katalin É. Kiss (1987, 1999, 2002) and in a considerable number of articles.
- <sup>5</sup> Cf. Sgall – Hajičová – Benešová 1973 and the references cited therein.
- <sup>6</sup> Examples from É. Kiss 1987: 24–25.
- <sup>7</sup> Cf. Brassai 1852, 1860, 1863–1865, 1874, 1885.
- <sup>8</sup> Cited by É. Kiss (1982: 336). It is worth quoting in this connection Lambrecht (1994: 6) who mentions identifiability and activation as the second type of categories of information structure: these categories "have to do with a speaker's assumptions about the statuses of the mental representations of discourse referents in the addressee's mind at the time of the utterance". The difference between Lambrecht and Brassai is a matter of wording.
- <sup>9</sup> Brassai was never happy with the terms he proposed that is why he came up with a new term in each of his major works.
- <sup>10</sup> Apparently, the first linguist who was aware of the problem of word order was Henri Weil (1844) rediscovered in the 30s by Prague School scholars. Word order was discussed more thoroughly by Georg von der Gabelentz in two papers published in 1869 and 1875, respectively. Brassai 1885 contains a critical examination of the latter. For a brief comparison of Weil and von der Gabelentz see Kiefer 1998.
- <sup>11</sup> This latter statement needs some refinement: only specific noun phrases can function as topics, in other words, the topic must be a referring expression. Cf. the contrast between *Egy könyvet nem találok a lakásban* 'There is a (specific) book that I don't find in the apartment' – *Nem találok egy könyvet a lakásban* 'I don't find a (any) book in the apartment' or 'I don't find a (certain) book in the apartment' (É. Kiss 1987: 76–77).
- <sup>12</sup> The first use of the question test is attributed to Hatcher 1956 but, as we saw, it had already been proposed by Brassai in 1863–1865.
- <sup>13</sup> Since optionally the topic, too, can carry stress and in addition to full stress the sentence normally also contains elements, which carry secondary stress, Brassai's formulation is not quite adequate: 'the first stressed element' must be replaced by 'the element which carries the first obligatory stress'.
- <sup>14</sup> Contrary to É. Kiss 2002: 11.

- 15 Such sentences are usually referred to as sentences expressing a *thetic* judgment or simply *thetic* sentences. Cf. Kuroda 1972 for the term 'thetic judgment'.
- 16 Such sentences are called *categorical* since they express a *categorical* judgment. Cf. Kuroda 1972 for the term 'categorical judgment'.
- 17 The examples are taken from Gécseg – Kiefer (forthcoming).
- 18 Zsuzsanna Gécseg's example (p.c.).
- 19 For details cf. Gécseg – Kiefer 2005.
- 20 Cf. Gécseg 2004.
- 21 Cf. the discussion of 'event reporting sentences' in Lambrecht 1994: 137–146.
- 22 Cf. Maleczki 1998.



# NATIONAL AND COMPARATIVE LITERATURE IN THE AGE OF GLOBALIZATION

MIHÁLY SZEGEDY-MASZÁK

Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest  
Hungary

In a world of globalization it is the task of literary historians to reassess their national legacy from the new perspective. The past can never be taken for granted and never be forgotten; it is the result of interpretation. Poetic traditions are inseparable from linguistic structures, language as collective memory, and so they cannot be easily transferred into another culture. If historiography cannot do without teleology, we have to think in terms of different teleologies. It is undeniably difficult to fulfill contradictory demands, but a literary historian cannot stop making arguments and counterarguments.

**Keywords:** Hungarian literature, comparative literature, literary historiography, globalization, value judgement, cult of genius, interpretation, translation

On May 1, 2004 ten countries joined the European Union. This may affect not only the politics and economy but also the intellectual life of the new member states. The Bologna Program involves a drastic restructuring of higher education and can lead to fundamental changes in a wide range of disciplines, including literary studies. Rarely has the very legitimacy of Comparative Literature been so comprehensively called into question. It is possible that from the beginning of September 2006 the university departments in Hungary representing this discipline will be Comparative Literature departments in name only. In Budapest the courses on the B. A. level are planned to be offered in cultural studies and in literary theory, following the instructions coming from Brussels. The assumption is that in the EU such courses may attract more students than Comparative Literature courses.

At the same time, departments teaching literature written in the vernacular are on the defensive. In a period of globalization, some are concerned about the future of languages of limited distribution, such as Finnish, Estonian, or Hungarian. What good is a writer's message if there is no medium through which to communicate it? That question is asked by writers and literary scholars. As a historian of Hungarian literature, who has also been involved in comparative projects, I shall

try to present here a case study that may give insight into the intellectual climate of a post-Communist society. My conclusions will be drawn from my experience as editor in chief of a new history of Hungarian literature in preparation. Is there an objective in my investigation, an intention through which my meditation might find its place within a broader context? A proposition and a hope that would be pursued in the work to be completed by the end of 2005? I would like to hold up a mirror to literary historiography in which it can recognize its difficulties. What follows is a substantially revised version of a televised public lecture I gave in Budapest in 2004 that should let things emerge with enough clarity to allow us to reflect upon these difficulties.

National or Comparative Literature? This question cannot be answered because it is incorrectly stated. The twenty-first century may bring tendencies pointing towards cultural homogeneity. This change may place literatures that are internationally not too well-known into a new context. In a world of globalization it is the task of literary historians to reassess their national legacy from a new perspective. Instead of believing that it is possible to narrate events 'as they had happened in reality', scholars may be tempted to present the same event from different, sometimes even contradictory perspectives. In the past the emphasis was placed on the personality of the writer or on evolutionary processes; in the future important, perhaps even drastic, changes in the structure of the reading public may serve as a starting point.

### 1. The Illusion of an Unbiased Literary History

"The age of universal progress", "the period of decline", "the age of rebirth", *From the Enlightenment to a Dark Age, Nation and Progress, Fifty Years of Impatience and Delay*. Such titles suggest that Hungarian literary historiography has been marked by a teleology implying international or national progress. In 1908 János Horváth wrote of literature "written in Hungary, in the Hungarian language, of Hungarian content, and of artistic value". Between the two world wars Antal Szerb spoke of the literature of the church, the aristocracy, the nobility, and the bourgeoisie. In the Communist period a middle ground was sought between the ideals of international social progress and national development. The question arises if these perspectives are still valid in our age. The scholar committed to such conceptions remains, as we have discovered, prisoner to a world of values and representations, which, though valid in a short term, are always presented as absolute.

Today a historian of literature cannot pretend to be an omniscient observer, who believes that facts are free from theoretical preconceptions. Hermeneutics has taught us that preconception is never opposed to understanding; it is a sine qua



non of interpretation. Those who insist on finding what they call the real meaning of a text are unaware of their prejudices. Just as the interpretation of a painting is never limited to the reconstruction of its iconology, since we see it not in its “original state” but as it has been handed down to us by tradition, in a similar way, the message of a poem, novel, or play depends on the history of its reception.

It is misleading to claim that historical events did happen but are no longer accessible in their original identity, for such an assumption would imply a distinction between facts and interpretations as well as the possibility of a value-free transmission of the past. The past can never be taken for granted; it is the result of interpretation. The very concept of the historical event involves an interpretive perspective. A literary work is not an object with some permanent, fixed meaning. Lasting aesthetic value is inseparable from changing interpretations.

What Derrida called “mondialisation” may put national cultures, especially language-based literatures, in a new context. Public taste is affected by popular culture, by an entertainment industry controlled by the international market, and by increasingly globalized, privately owned advertising firms. The rapidly changing conditions, the global economy and media, tourism, the creation of the European Union, and the world-wide dominance of the English language may demand a radical reinterpretation. This is the starting point of my short analysis of some of the key words that have been used by literary historians. Since there is no room for a systematic investigation, I will limit myself to a consideration of biographical, national, comparative, evolutionary, and reception-oriented approaches.

## 2. Biography and Literary History

In the nineteenth century many books were written with the idea that canonical works can be interpreted with the help of biographical information. This is part and parcel of our legacy; its legitimacy cannot be questioned if we believe in history. Still, it is undeniable that the cult of genius may easily inspire scholars to relegate works of art to biographical fragments. Although we may no longer be satisfied with the structural description of self-sufficient creations, we should avoid the temptation of believing in the identity and homogeneity of human personality closed up in itself, a preconception questioned as early as the fifteenth century by Montaigne and others. It is not enough to say that the portrait of the artist is a respectable genre but cannot dominate historiography. Wölfflin’s ideal of art history without names may lead to far-fetched conclusions, but it is possible to question the homogeneity of an artist’s output. Translation and intertextuality belong to the mode of existence of the literary work of art and make an author’s entire work – what the French call “un oeuvre” in opposition to “une oeuvre” – a questionable entity. Works tend to read and rewrite each other, but such relations are

not limited to texts composed by the same writer. The factors that determine the ultimate meaning of the relation of a work to its historical moment are more diverse. All attempts to generalize about a genre, movement, or period take this assumption as their starting hypothesis.

### 3. National and Comparative Literary History

One of the most difficult tasks a historian has to face is drawing the line between a value judgment and a personal bias. All judgments are based on preconceptions, whether conscious or unconscious. In the nineteenth century the distinction between the significant and the second-rate was often drawn in terms of contributing to the creation of national identity. Most histories of national literatures focused on the national characteristics of literary works. This conception, whether ethnocentric or language-based, belongs to the past, but the past can never be forgotten. Soon our own world will belong to it. Human beings live in history. If you travel from upper New York state to Arizona, you will see that architecture is rooted in geographical and material conditions that are of profoundly local character. In a similar way, poetic traditions are inseparable from linguistic structures, language as collective memory, and so they cannot be easily transferred into another culture. 'Les mots sont intraduisibles', says one of the finest translators of our age,

malgré ce que les concepts ont d'universel. On sait ce que sont les espèces végétales, mais le *chestnut-tree* de Yeats n'est ni le marronnier ni le chataignier car son environnement, qui fait partie de son sens, c'est pour l'anglophone un village d'Angleterre ou d'Irlande, ou tel collège d'Oxford (Bonney 2000a, 48).

In "English the word is an opening, it is all surface, and in French it is a closing, it is all depth", the same author wrote in another essay (Bonney 2004, 220). Ezra Pound characterized the difference between the Greek and English languages that is of special significance for those who write verse in these two languages in the following manner:

in the case of Greek hexameter rhythm the quantity is supposedly the constant and the position of the accent, the variant. As a matter of fact the quantity is a variable within limits very much greater than permitted in English "pentameter" (accentual) (Pound 1996, 93).

In French the final, in Hungarian the first syllable is stressed. In my essays on Bartók's opera *Duke Bluebeard's Castle*, I tried to point out that musical structure is distorted in both the interpretations based on a translated text and the recordings

made with singers with a foreign accent (Szegedy-Maszák 2003, 2005). To sing in a language you do not know is certainly a difficult undertaking, but it clearly reveals the limitations of someone's ability to understand the other. As a remarkable music critic of the early twentieth century wrote, "one should discourage singing in unassimilated foreign tongues" (Pound 1977, 98). All I could add is that such singing is comparable to bad translations.

Speaking about the idea that poetry is what cannot be translated, Hugh Kenner quoted the following lines of Keats:

Forlorn: the very word is like a bell  
To toll me back from thee to my sad self.

The very word, we may be persuaded, is like a bell, in a language where the syllables of *forlorn* can enact a grave equable tolling, and where *bell* rings clear with the *l*-sound in which *forlorn* turns. But "Perdu: l'expression même est comme une cloche"? It simply isn't" (Kenner 1971, 128–129).

I wonder if Bonnefoy was aware of Kenner's observation when he translated The English poet's *Ode to the Nightingale* into French. My impression is that his version, published almost thirty years later, supports his thesis that English poetry is hardly translatable into French: 'Perdu! Ce mot lui-même et comme un glas / Qui ne prive to toi et me rend à rien / Que ce que je puis être' (Bonnefoy 2000b, 22).

In 1914, several years before Walter Benjamin wrote his celebrated essay *Die Aufgabe des Übersetzers*, Décső Kosztolányi published his translation collection *Modern Poets* with a short preface in which he gave an interpretation far more radical than his contemporary. Asking his readers to look at his translations not in place of but side by side with the originals, he made a persuasive case for the untranslatable, a presupposition he later expanded in numerous essays on the signified and the signifier as two possible starting points for those who wished to recreate a linguistic utterance in another language. "I regard translation as creation and not as making copies", he wrote. "The so-called original text is comparable to the object of the painting" (Kosztolányi 1988, 1: 531).

Bonnefoy and Kenner spoke of a wide gap between English and French. Kosztolányi, a poet and prose writer whose firm belief was that it was not the author but language that was responsible for creating verbal art, could take a more radical position because in his case the distance between the source and the target languages (that is, cultures) was even greater. Like Finnish and Estonian, Hungarian does not belong to the family of Indo-European languages. The fact that Kosztolányi developed a language-based cultural relativism, yet translated *The Winter's Tale*, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, as well as texts by authors ranging from Villon to Antonio Machado, Donne to Rilke, Goethe to Baudelaire,

Faulkner to Futurist and Imagist poets suggests that although he may have been convinced that rhythm was not translatable, he did not resign himself to the impossibility of his task. He was convinced that communication was inseparable from translation, taking it for granted that the success of a translation always depended on how it was received in the target culture.

Comparative literature may remind us that translation and interpretation are closely related. The presupposition that “l’interprétation est *ouverte* (...); et la traduction est *fermée*” (Bonnefoy 2000, 47) is in contradiction with the legacy of hermeneutics. Still, it is easier to construct a theory about the combination of national and comparative literary history than to practice it. Instead of trying to reach a compromise between different cultures, comparative studies should aim at a “‘testing’ of one way of thinking by another” (Bonnefoy 2004, 224). The comparison of literatures in languages of wide distribution has an established tradition, but the historians of literatures in languages of limited distribution have to choose between two options: either they may continue to discuss the works written in their mother tongues in terms of a teleology based on a hypothetical development of national character or they can try to link them to internationally well-known works. Let me admit that I find the discussion of Hungarian literature in some comparative works a little problematic. I have been involved in such projects for more than thirty years, so I am painfully aware of the difficulties of the task. Let me mention a book published a long time ago, *The Symbolist Movement in the Literature of European Languages* (Budapest: Akadémiai, 1982). I greatly respected its editor, Anna Balakian, reviewed and taught this collection, yet could never overcome the feeling that in some of its chapters certain texts were discussed not because they represented Symbolism but because some scholars tried to find international recognition for works they admired. The tendency to regard less accessible literatures as copies of the so-called great literatures I find somewhat unsatisfactory. On the one hand, specialists of cultures attached to languages of limited distribution may regard the international treatment of their cultures rather superficial; on the other hand, it may be argued that reading in one’s mother tongue, in some other language, and in translation are three distinct modes of understanding, and so it is quite possible that the ‘same’ work is more important from one and less important from another perspective. That may explain the difference between national fame and international recognition. In 2002 Imre Kertész was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature. There are Hungarian readers who fail to understand this decision, because they regard other works by contemporary writers as more significant. What these readers may not realize is that value judgments depend on perspectives. *Fatelessness* has become an important contribution to the international canon of holocaust literature. In other words, it has been taken out from the canon of Hungarian literature and placed in another context.

In the visual arts it may be much easier to think in terms of international trends and influences than in literature. It might be possible, for instance, to speak about the legacy of Caravaggio in those paintings of Georges de La Tour (1593–1652) and Joseph Wright of Derby (1734–1797) in which “chiaroscuro” (the contrast between light and darkness) plays a major role, and the connections between the paintings of Claude Gellée (le Lorrain) and Turner, or Turner and Monet are even more well-known. Literature is so closely tied to language that it is much more difficult to demonstrate such analogies. Petrarchism may have been one of the few trends with implications for literatures in several Western languages. In more recent periods it would be less easy to find trends that transcend linguistic boundaries, especially if we try to break free of Eurocentrism.

It goes without saying that the autonomy of local cultures is a mere illusion. History has known many cases in which one culture became subordinated to another. The question is whether we are not moving in a direction that can lead to an entirely new phase in which the globalization of the media could go together with a decline of local cultures. While it may be true that translation ‘est une des activités de notre temps malheureux qui pourraient contribuer à sauver le monde’ (Bonnefoy 2000, 44), there are different degrees of translatability. The *Concerto for Orchestra* is the internationally most popular work of Béla Bartók. It is not necessarily his finest composition. Language-based works are even more difficult to translate. Some years ago one of my American doctoral students fell in love with a nineteenth-century Hungarian novel written about seventeenth-century Transylvania. He is planning to translate it into English, despite my warning that there can be no market for such a work. An unsophisticated equation between accessibility and aesthetic value has to be avoided, but it may be difficult to resolve the conflict between local and international values.

#### 4. Evolution and Literary History

Biographical, national, and comparative approaches to literary history have one element in common: they rely on the metaphor of organic growth leading from youth to maturity and decadence when defining the place of a given work in history. Consciously or unconsciously, most literary histories show the influence of Giorgio Vasari’s *Le Vite de’ più eccellenti pittori, scultori ed architetti*. The mimetic value of painting or drawing on a flat surface may have developed in the course of some centuries, but it would be difficult to find a similar teleology in the history of music or literature. The attempts to rank the different modes of literary representation have inflicted severe damage to the understanding of verbal art. The rise of free verse or the growing emphasis on the portrayal of the mind of the characters may be regarded as processes counterbalanced by other historical phe-

nomena. The orchestration of *La symphonie fantastique* is new in comparison with that of Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony*, but in terms of thematic development the earlier opus could be called much more 'advanced' than the French composer's work. Gustave Kahn's free verse poems show a more innovative prosody than Mallarmé's sonnets, yet it would be a mistake to call the latter more conservative. New and old, creation and imitation are matters of historical perspective. Johann Sebastian Bach's cantata "Gottes Zeit ist die allerbeste Zeit" (BWV 106), known as *Actus tragicus*, was taken for an archaic work in the early eighteenth century. For the Romantics it seemed a highly innovative, even experimental, composition.

In a postcolonial world, it is especially dangerous to think in terms of one-sided oppositions. The understanding of the cultures of languages of limited distribution is difficult until we discard our faith in the homogeneity of *Zeitgeist*. The volume on Symbolism mentioned earlier contains several chapters on works that have not much to do with the definition of that movement outlined in the opening section of the book. Mallarmé was not religious, insisted on the impersonal nature of poetry, and excluded both moral teaching and political message from art. Ady was a poet of the egotistical sublime and published both devotional and openly political poems. A certain looseness in the use of concepts may perhaps help to explain why less well-known literatures have not succeeded in joining the international canon. To make Ady accessible for the international community, it would be necessary either to redefine Symbolism or to stop calling this Hungarian poet a Symbolist. To be fair to the volume in question, it has to be added that although it contains a chapter on Ady's poetry, its author did his best to avoid calling it a manifestation of Symbolism.

## 5. Literary History with a Reader-response Orientation

Sometimes it is argued that the tension between artistic and historical values can be resolved by focusing on the reception of literary works. Undeniably, the historians of national literatures have paid little attention to the life of the works.

In recent decades, the idea of the self-sufficient work of art has been replaced by an emphasis on *Wirkungsgeschichte*. Interest has shifted from studio to live recordings. The ideal of objective interpretation represented by Stravinsky, Hindemith, and Toscanini has been superseded by that of personal involvement represented by such artists as Wilhelm Furtwängler in the past or Christian Thielemann among our contemporaries. It would be a simplification to regard this change in taste as a return to the legacy of Romanticism. The history of performance practice both in literature and in music shows that interpreters had more freedom before the twentieth century. In Elizabethan England the dividing line between actors

and playwrights was not clear-cut. Bach, Mozart, and Liszt were both composers and performers.

Those who ask for the restoration of what they call the original meaning of a work of art represent a profoundly anti-historical position. Translations, adaptations, Renaissance plays, or the works of such authors as Henry James, Dezső Kosztolányi, or Attila József may remind us that a text is never a given entity; it recreates and thus questions its own integrity. In Romantic poetry it is often pointless to ask whether fragmentariness is intentional or accidental, just as it is meaningless to argue if a painting is finished or not. Distinguished scholars suggest that it is by no means certain that we can continue to speak of masterpieces or modernity. Well-known critics have spoken about the tradition of innovation. In any case, the origin of the concept of genius can be traced back to hero worship, a cult that can be regarded as outmoded.

The conclusion is inescapable that it follows from the mode of existence of the literary work of art that the reader has a task similar to the activity of an editor who considers different versions. Rereading is closely related to rewriting and translation. To insist on the restoration of original meaning would mean that we ascribe an essence to the work of art that is independent of both space and time. The public's response to *The Merchant of Venice* may have been affected by the tragedy of the holocaust. Since interpretation involves reading according to given circumstances, a literary historian has to examine how readers, who lived in different places and periods, responded to texts. The main difficulty in achieving this goal is the limited access we have to the information on the history of reception. Musicologists may be better off, since performances have been recorded for a century or so. Much less is known about the history of reading. Because of the limited range of interpretations preserved in writing, we have to reconstruct the interrelations of reading habits, linguistic conventions, artistic, ideological, and political attitudes, social institutions, and the media that serve to record, transfer, and develop information.

## 6. Tentative Conclusions

To the question as to how literary history can be written in the twenty-first century my tentative answer is that teleology has to be both affirmed and denied. In contrast to those who stay within the limits of the canon established and preserved by institutions, we can never stop asking ourselves on what grounds certain texts have left their mark on culture. Historical impact and artistic value are in constant interaction.

It is possible that the history of a national literature can no longer be told as a narrative, just as the identity of an author's output or the continuity of the legacy of

a genre can be questioned. Having lost their identities, literary works can serve as starting points for several histories. The ideal of a finished, complete, and definitive interpretation has to be rejected, since understanding per definition is partial. Teleologies create canons, but canons are incompatible with history. One of the difficulties in writing a new history of Hungarian literature is that those who read in this language represent a divided public that consists of interpretive communities with different, even incompatible value systems. No one can claim to have the authority that could guarantee irrefutable judgments.

If historiography cannot do without teleology, we have to think in terms of different teleologies. They are needed if we assume that literature can also be considered to be a cultural legacy that should be preserved and taught. At the same time, it cannot be forgotten that every significant work is in a sense a new start. Starting from scratch was an ideal shared by some at the time of the 're-naissance' and the 're-formation', as well as by the Romantics who viewed the primitive, medieval, or the exotic as an antidote to the illnesses caused by modernization.

It is undeniably difficult to fulfill contradictory demands, but a literary historian cannot stop making arguments and counterarguments. The texts we are working with are not finished products standing outside time but formations that are constantly recreated by new generations. We are writing the history of changing interpretations, so it may be more important to put our work on the internet than to publish it in a book form that gives no room for perpetual modifications.

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# DESCRIPTION AS SELF-REFLECTION IN ZSIGMOND JUSTH'S *MŰVÉSZ SZERELEM*<sup>1</sup>

VIKTÓRIA DIAN

Eötvös Loránd University, Department of Comparative Literature, Budapest  
Hungary

This paper focuses on a forgotten Hungarian author's forgotten novel. Zsigmond Justh's *Művész szerelem* [Artist's Love] was published in 1888 and considered to be a "styleroman", because a number of artistic styles meet in the landscapes it depicts, involving the basic changes in literature from realism to impressionism, Art Nouveau, symbolism, and naturalism. This study examines these descriptive parts of the novel because they provide a peculiar type of self-reflection. The analysis starts with the description of a character's appearance which can be conceived as a narrative representation of portraiture. Then two narrated landscapes reflecting on their own compositions are examined. The aim of the paper is to establish that most of the descriptive parts have the same function in the novel: they denaturalize the spectacle, representing a created visual structure which refers to the text itself, and builds on a narrative mechanism disavowing the realistic illusion. Finally, the analysis concludes that description can be regarded as *mise en abyme* in the novel because the descriptive parts illustrate the priority of the artist's subjectivity in art just as the whole novel realises this aesthetical idea as well.

**Keywords:** Hungarian literature, nineteenth-century novel, Zsigmond Justh, self-reflection, description, *mise en abyme*, focalization

Zsigmond Justh is considered as a forgotten author of nineteenth-century Hungarian literature. His social efforts to modernize Hungarian society and his ambitious activity to institutionalize the cultural life of the country were appreciated by following generations, but the place of his literary works has been a subject of controversy. Some novels of Justh's planned tetralogy entitled *A kiválás genezise*, edited by András Diószegi in the 1960s, illustrate the idea of his social reforms: mix together the bloodlines of the land labourers and the aristocracy. Justh's writings were often criticised on account of their ideological aspects, that is, that his ideas of reform oppress the esthetical value of his novels.

Zsigmond Justh wanted to be both a productive reformer and a modern writer, who tried to renew the traditional narrative forms based on Petőfi's and Arany's folkloristic language.<sup>2</sup> As a reformer, Justh's aim was to encourage the growth of a

talented, well-informed, ambitious national reform-aristocracy who have clear and efficient principles on the social, political and economic modernization of Hungary. He founded a Debating Society based on the British example in order to cultivate Hungarian magnates. Once or twice a week they had meetings, with 15–20 members present, and gave presentations on various fields of natural sciences, literature, the arts, and politics, then discussed these presentations and other current problems, and concluded the meeting with musical performances.

Another of Justh's projects was the Society of Maecenas on the model of French Salons. He managed to persuade Mrs. Csáky, the wife of the Minister of Culture, to open the first salon. Their goal was to produce flourishing cultural life in Hungary forged by a deep social contact between artists and the aristocracy. Later, he had a theatre built on his property, where peasants performed classical and contemporary plays. Besides these projects, he spent most of his unfortunately brief life trying to introduce Hungarian literature in Europe, especially in the Francophone territories.

The reception of Justh's writings was reignited by the critics of *Nyugat* in the early 1940s.<sup>3</sup> Some critics underestimated his novels and short stories, but praised his *Journal* for its historiocultural values;<sup>4</sup> others did not find his oeuvre significant.<sup>5</sup> András Diószegi (*Irodalomtörténeti Közlemények* [Literary history], 1960/6) and Imre Bori<sup>6</sup> rediscovered Zsigmond Justh as a lovable figure of Hungarian literary history, whose efforts had died as his generation had lost the courage necessary for reforms.

*Művész szerelem* [Artist's Love] can be regarded as a peculiar exception among Justh's illustrative novels. This essay will aim to highlight the literary values of this forgotten novel, which was originally published in 1888, because it represents a self-referential type of the modern novel at the end of the nineteenth century. This self-referential way of narration can be found on three levels in *Művész szerelem*: formal, thematical and structural reflection are all at work between the novel and its characters' creative process. The descriptive parts of *Művész szerelem* provide a peculiar type of textual mirroring, because they involve the whole subject of the book. It ought to be mentioned that criticism based on the theory of description set out from the relevant descriptive elements of Proust's *A la recherche du temps perdu* and defined their function as a fundamental attribute of early modernism.<sup>7</sup> Sándor Márai was the only one who noticed some similarity between Proust's and Justh's works.<sup>8</sup> This essay tries to reveal the self-referential aspect of the descriptive parts in Justh's *Művész szerelem* and also to point out that Justh attempted to follow the narrative technical devices of the *fin-de-siècle* and adopt them into Hungarian literature. These efforts probably were not in vain.

### Formal and Thematical Level

The characters in *Művész szerelem* are artists almost without exception. One of them, Arzén Gilády is working on his new novel based on a specific aesthetical program:

The whole is a modern love story. I would like to show how we obey the eternal law, which keeps the world going. I want to point out the influence of science and intellectual development on love. I want to point out how the mental progress weakens love. The construction of the novel itself follows the requirements of our age: short, fitting strictly to its subject without any redundancy.<sup>9</sup>

Arzén's final conclusion would be that people are not able to be in love in his age, because a modern artist can not have any relation with the transcendence from where, according to him, love comes. Arzén's ideas are derived on one hand from the theory of evolution, on the other hand from the feeling of the *maladie de fin-de-siècle*, the generational depression caused by the idea of determination and the fall of the positivist world-concept. The final conclusion of *Művész szerelem* is also that the *fin-de-siècle* man is not able to be in love, because Arzén is so obsessed with the analysis that his relationship with Paula becomes governed by his writing process and by his artistic endeavours to create a life-like heroine. In the end he completes his novel but loses his lover.

The artist as a literary character can be regarded as an attribute in Justh's oeuvre. Arzén Gilády (*Művész szerelem*), Gábor Szeghalmy (*Az utolsó hangulat*) or Lipót Czobor – modelled on László Mednyánszky, a Hungarian painter and Justh's friend (*Fuimus*) – are the most characteristic ones. They are symbols of self-destructive sensibility, which gives people a more profound cognition of life.<sup>10</sup> According to Péter Pór's interpretation, the figure of the artist in Justh's novels does not fit in with the *fin-de-siècle* scheme of art contra life, but the artist's fate is to realise an extraordinary and self-destructive life. The characters like Arzén Gilády are victims of consistent self-analysis. Pór states that this kind of artist concept with its more intellectual conclusion is more sensitive than that of Justh's contemporaries. In Justh's novels, a situation determines the plot in the cross-point of an Existence-Love-Art triangle representing the world through an artist's eyes. Pór shows that Justh creates "illustrative novels" by elaborating an idea of art and creative process, and the love story is just the framing of narrative.

Imre Bori in his essay<sup>11</sup> emphasises the formal concept of the novel; Justh follows his subject thoroughly, without deviations from the plot. The comparison is obvious: the conclusion of Arzén's novel is the same as the result of Justh's story; the subject matters of the novels are also the same (analysing the hero's psyché), and we must not neglect to take notice that Justh accepts Arzén's formal requirements in his novel as well.<sup>12</sup>

### Structural Level

Zsigmond Justh's book, *Művész szerelem* can be conceived as a novel of aesthetical disputes. A romantic painter and an impressionist artist discuss aesthetical theories of art with a naturalist, analyst writer. Ernő, the romantic painter creates historical paintings, in accordance with his opinion that only vast, monumental compositions have a great importance in the arts. In his point of view, "the artist who paints Socrates' head is of higher quality than those who daub a ripe water-melon on canvas"<sup>13</sup> (40). For him, the aim of an artist is to delight the spectators' eye, and only the dignity of the subject can have an influence on people. Paula's favorite artists are the Flemish painters, as she appreciates the paintings representing workers or people's everyday life. She detests Ernő's work because of the lack of realistic "historical opium". Paula's paintings represent impressions by fine colours and tender tones. She refuses a didactic message when it comes to art and proclaims the idea of l'art pour l'art. In his novels Arzén Gilády tries to analyse the human psyché based on an actual living person. He examines Paula's reactions, motivations, and activities. Arzén and Paula agree that Ernő's historical paintings are not modern without subjective elements; moreover, he constructs a false image of reality. Everything that can be declared as modern in this novel seems to be under the influence of the artist's subjectivity. In his essay<sup>14</sup> György Bodnár states that *Művész szerelem* declares the autonomous existence of an artwork, because this idea conquers the artist-character's polemia. This paper is going to examine how the descriptive parts realise the character's theory of art.

### Justh's Aesthetical Taste

The idea of priority of the artist's subjectivity can be found in Justh's *Párizsi Napló* [Parisian Journal]. Justh visited Paris for the first time in 1882, and he became a popular figure of French salons and artistdom at once. Due to his regular travels to Paris, he became known as a Hungarian artist with an exotic image of the "puszta". Justh also became acquainted with celebrities: Sarah Bernard, Hypolite Taine, Paul Bourget, Karl-Joris Huysmans, Anatole France, Barbey d'Aurevilly, and because of his noble origins he was a well-known guest of the most important salons and cafés.

In 1888 he had written "half notes" about his Parisian lifestyle, which would be published after more than half a century as *Párizsi Napló*. Justh's reputation was so high in Paris at the time that some extracts of these notes and his letters were published in French as well.<sup>15</sup> In his *Journal* Justh mentioned the pre-Raphaelite painters. He came to know two pre-Raphaelite artists, R. W. Bunny and G. F.

Carry Elwes, whose paintings he found very similar to Doré's or Puvis de Chavannes' works. He writes about them as follows:

Both are under influence of the pre-Raphaelite era. Their poets: Swinburn, Dante Gabriel Rossetti. Their painters: (among the old masters) the Primitives: Giotto, Fra Angelico, Bellini, and the Spanish school, Leonardo da Vinci and Titian's portraits. Tout à fait mon affaire ça! [...] Both are Laurent's students.<sup>16</sup>

Justh wanted to have his *Journal* published with Bunny's and Elwes' portrait of him on the cover. He also remarks that he prefers Moreau's paintings to canvases in the academic style. Justh's reports on Madame Ayen's salon where he found 60 paintings by "one of the most refined and diseased painters of the most subtle age".<sup>17</sup> Justh considers the *Vision of Salome* as Moreau's masterpiece.

Justh visited the Primitive's paintings in the Louvre twice, and he appreciated Besnar's and Puvis de Chavannes' compositions because of their colourful effects. Katalin Gellér's study<sup>18</sup> on the relevancies of the fine arts in Justh's *Párizsi Napló* reveals that the first trends of symbolism, which agreed at some points with romantic historicism and with the renewed classicistic tendency attracted Justh's attention in Paris. The other important element of his interest is mysticism. His Russian friend, Antokolsky's personality embodied the mixture of mysticism and the Primitives for him.<sup>19</sup>

Justh also states that the most impressive element of a painting is the artist himself (*Párizsi Napló* 135), and declares that an artist has to be "interested in life only through his own emotional experience"<sup>20</sup> (*Hazai Napló* 449–450). That's why it is not so surprising that Justh preferred his friend's, László Mednyánszky's paintings to the world-famous Mihály Munkácsy's popular works. The difference between the two artists seems to be of a very great importance; Munkácsy's compositions were being sold all over the world, and as he had moved to Paris to participate in French salon-life intensely, he became beloved by all there. Munkácsy's historical paintings and famous trilogy of Christ's Passion won him real fame. In his *Journal*, Justh complains that Munkácsy forgot his native language, but he had not learned proper French either, that his works are vast without "philosophical depth", and not modern at all. Justh condemns him for his decorative salon-paintings and advises him to paint landscapes (*Párizsi Napló*, notes in April 1888).

As opposed to Munkácsy, Mednyánszky was of aristocratic origin; and he represented the last generation of his family. The Justh-family of Necpál also derived its origin from the twelfth century. Zsigmond Justh had been born in Szenttornya on the land inherited from his mother's side (as he wrote in his *Hazai Napló*). In spite of all the intensive relationship with the magnates, the family did not belong to the aristocracy, but they were wealthy gentry.<sup>21</sup> In *Hazai Napló* Justh regularly wrote about his relatives, mainly about his cousins, Ferenc and György, with

whom he visited Necpál, the ancient family nest and one of the properties the family had possessed since 1273. The country-house was owned by a Lutheran branch of the family: a Révay–Justh couple. Zsigmond Justh mentions in his *Journal* that this it is the thirteenth marriage between the two ancient families. He regarded the different generations of his own family as a series of degenerations infected with the noble disease caused by intermarriage with close relatives and featuring suicidal descendants. The personal experience of being the last generation of a traditional noble family contributed to Justh's idea of social reform through regeneration by intermarriage between peasants and aristocrats.

Justh appreciated Mednyánszky's paintings because they represented human poverty and sorrow. Mednyánszky took his themes from the world of coachmen, charcoal-burners, fishermen, sailors and shepherds. He collected criminals and vagabonds around himself, he lived among them. His homosexuality turned his sensibility toward people on the margin of society. Mednyánszky and Justh had similar theories of Hungary's national problems, and they drew attention to the values of Hungarian peasant culture. Furthermore, both of them were probably members of a theosophical association following Chevilon's ideas.<sup>22</sup> Justh in *A Hét* praised his friend, and wrote that "he is one of the deepest painters among our artists and because of this, the most difficult to understand".<sup>23</sup> In this article Justh emphasized Mednyánszky's mysticism as well.

Mysticism, pre-Raphaelite's visionariness, and Mednyánszky's sensibility for suffering are the markers of the territory where Justh's aesthetical taste can be revealed. Besides, his interest focused mainly on the artist's personality, which takes priority in art.

### Description as Narrative

The yellowish tone of desolate scenery was refracted in places by some girls in colourful kerchiefs collecting violets, or by some old grannies dressed in the colour of mortality carying with a stoop their bundles of woods on their way to home.

– Oh, God, how sorrowful is everything here! – said Arzén.

– Very impressive! Let's see how a beautiful picture would be made by that granny with the woods on her back, yellow on yellow just like an eau forte.<sup>24</sup> (175–176)

One topic, but two narrated paintings occur in description quoted above. Paula and Arzén give two different aesthetical (and ethical) points of view for the same subject: poverty. The scenery provides an impression for Arzén, but Paula produces a picture of it. Both of them try to avoid regarding Nature as Nature, but instead, they try to create a landscape by using the terms of the arts. The expressions

like “yellowish tone”, or “desolate scenery was refracted” refer to an impressionist painting dominated by the colours of violet and black (the colour of mortality), representing people in Nature. Paula takes further steps towards the denaturalization of description: she imagines an etching (eau forte) in yellow. The two viewers see the same scenery in two different artificial ways, but neither of their perspectives refers to “real Nature.” They set a narrated picture as an object of art for the reader, who in this way is expected to focus on the process of description instead of the scenery. Mieke Bal uses the term of “de-naturalized description”<sup>25</sup> concerning Proust’s descriptive parts in *A la recherche du temps perdu*, in which the characters are represented not in a real way, but in artificial forms due to the fragmental and photographic narrative devices. Examining late-modern fiction Bal finds that the meta-deictic function is very common in their discursive form: “This is a complex, rather than a simple order, in which the elements refer not to the described object but to description.” Regarding our example in *Művész szerelem*, it tends to follow this modernist aspect of self-referential description. But what is exactly description itself? How can we separate it from the other parts of a text?

### Description versus Narration?

The first definitions of description lead us to ancient Greek theoretical works: Aristotle’s *Poetics* and Plato’s *Republic*. Gérard Genette compares these definitions and establishes that both theoreticians defined description as a reduced, restricted mode of literary representation: “... description can be conceived independently of narration, but practically we can find it hardly ever liberated from it, narration itself cannot exist without description, nevertheless this dependence still takes the first place constantly.”<sup>26</sup> Philippe Hamon draws on the history of European reflection on description in his famous work.<sup>27</sup> He states that in literary history the majority of theoreticians deemed dramatized description of Achilles’ shield by Homer as the proper type of description. Description (descriptif) remained in this way a subordinate form opposite to narrative for centuries.

The referential fallacy, the outworn heritage of classical theory is “the reason alleged for narrative’s negatively judged arresting of time is based not on discourse but on its referents”.<sup>28</sup> Due to this referential context of description the narrative theory traditionally defined it as a “boundary of narrative”. However, description purely separated from narration can hardly be found. As Marc Eli Blanchard notes, the contextual indications of time and place, and the milieu in which the characters evolve would be considered as extraneous to the narrative itself. Whilst this would be regarded as description, the core of the narrative would be the narration. The line between them is difficult to trace, and supposedly is

imaginative. In fact, narration proper may not exist at all. That is why – as Blanchard argues –

... in almost any narrative a descriptive intention or attitude on part of the narrator which can be reconstructed by the reader and whose signs and significance, if properly assessed, will stimulate our imagination and satisfy our unconscious need for appropriation and recognition.<sup>29</sup>

In this sense, the descriptive process of manipulation as a masking of existing narrative process works in the literary text. Mieke Bal looks further when she declares that the function of description can stimulate a subversive reading process.<sup>30</sup> She emphasises the context of description and elaborates an integrated descriptive model for the analysis of description. Genette affirms, as concerning the representational modes of narrative, to narrate an event and to describe an object are similar operations activating the same sources of language. Therefore, description is not a specific mode of language, but one of its aspects, or its certain point of view.

In the twentieth century description can be conceived as the place of rewriting, as a function of intertextuality, as a way of conservation, or as a practical exemplum of our knowledge about words and things, as Hamon asserts when he adverts to the role of description in *nouveau roman*. Marc Eli Blanchard refers to Hamon's thoughts when he writes:

... description is the way in which we must use language if we want to reflect upon its models. In this sense, the descriptive function in language is a very special one indeed: it is not only a referring or denoting one. It is the only one which enables us to identify a piece of information both as redundant [...] and as pertinent [...]. In other words, there is in a description something like surplus value, an aura which glorifies narrative discours and makes it more noticable.<sup>31</sup>

### The Reception of Descriptive Parts

Justh's first collection of short stories was published in 1887 while some earlier essays and the novel *Ádám* remained in manuscript until 1941. This volume *Káprázatok* [Illusions] and *Művész szerelem* were criticised severely by Justh's contemporaries, Elek Gozsdu, Jenő Rákosi, Jenő Péterfy, for Bourget's strong influence on them. Justh cut these out and made notes on them, which shows his sensibility towards negative criticism.<sup>32</sup> Although Justh's later works are of greater importance, in the reception of his oeuvre some critical essays esteem these earlier writings more. Greist Georgia Lenart examines the influence of French Natural-



ism on Hungarian novels focusing on the contemporary reactions to Hungarian naturalists like Sándor Bródy and Zsigmond Justh: "Some critics recognized Justh's talent and could agree with Bródy's evaluation in *A Hét* that Justh wrote 'the most complicated and difficult half notes' in Hungarian literature, but others were highly judgemental and saw only the imitator in the young writer."<sup>33</sup> Jenő Péterffy's book review criticized Justh's *Káprázatok* most severely. Péterffy, a well-known authority on literary criticism, blames Justh's attitude of servile imitation of the fashionable tendencies, and for his "Hamlet-perfumed mawbish, affected style", which seems to be dishonest and manneristic.<sup>34</sup> Justh never denied that he had begun to write on Taine's advice his first critical essay on Bourget in 1885.<sup>35</sup>

When *Művész szerelem* was published in 1888 it also encountered controversial reception. "A couple of things come to my mind about my remote land, the 'warm' reception of my new book"<sup>36</sup> – Justh complained to his friend, Antokolsky, the Russian painter in *Párizsi napló*. Although *Művész szerelem* was almost put to silence by Hungarian critics, one reviewer took notice of its descriptive elements (*Magyar Bazár* 1888/7), and appreciated their beauty. In the 1940s Gábor Halász claimed that one attribute of modernism can be revealed in Justh's early writings, when all types of arts have an effect at the same time: the novel paints visually, the picture narrates, the actor moves like a figure on the painting. Although Elemér Császár in his literary history points out that Justh sacrificed the harmony of the whole for his perfect fragments,<sup>37</sup> the critics of the 1980s emphasized his impressionist descriptive fragmental writings. György Bodnár places Justh's early novels in the Hungarian literary canon when he declares that the descriptive elements of his novels represent the impressionist style playing an important role in narration.<sup>38</sup> Adopting András Diószegi's idea, Imre Bori (*Irodalomtörténeti Közlemények* 1960/6) claims that Justh paints plain-air pictures of Budapest when he describes scenes. "When he depicts, it seems that he changes his pen, because his statements and analyses are dryer, more unpoetical with inelegancies of the style. So his landscapes are against the traditional forms."<sup>39</sup> According to Bori's opinion, a number of artistic styles meet in Justh's depicted landscapes: impressionism, Art Nouveau, symbolism, and naturalism. That is why *Művész szerelem* is known as a "styleroman" involving the basic changes from the 1880s: a protest against the traditional narrative forms of realism.<sup>40</sup>

### Portraits and Landscapes

Landscapes are just as frequent as portraits in the novel. When the narrator depicts Arzén's appearance, it seems to be a narrative representation of portraiture:

The sunshine of Spring illuminated all of his figure. His face reminded one of Byzantin icons painted on a golden background. His long profile, his narrow, almond-shaped eyes, his thin, long, dangling arms and long nose could have looked stylised, but his eyes showed faint, refined sensuality and deep feeling.<sup>41</sup> (10)

The narrator represents Arzén's personality by a portrayal referring to the artificial decadent representation of beauty. Imre Bori establishes the influence of pre-Raphaelite tendency and Art Nouveau in this narrated portrait. We can find more portrayals in the novel, like the descriptions of Eliza's (24) or Paula's appearance (56). In these portraits the female characters are seen from the narrator's perspective, and this way the narrator plays a part in the narrative as a focalizer. Mieke Bal argued that focalizers "can be embedded characters whose point of view the narrational voice adopts and, in free indirect discourse, even absorbs to the point of confusion. But the focalizers can also be the diffused ideologies or doxa that the speaking subject would like to disavow, as well as the speaker's unconscious views, fantasies, and preoccupations."<sup>42</sup> In *Művész szerelem*, portraits and landscapes in general are represented by the narrator, but the focalizer is not the narrator at any time. The narrational voice adopts different characters' points of view dominating the description, and these views control the elements of descriptive parts. In description the focalizer has a motivation for regarding his/her object; an opening door offering the view, or a ray of light glimmering through the window. As regards to Arzén's portrait, the "sunshine" gives motivation for the narrator to represent Arzén's appearance; the narrator depicts Arzén as the sunshine is illuminating all his figure, which reminds him of a painted icon or of a stylised picture. The description of Arzén's faces is not a realistic representation of his appearance but an ekphrasis of a visual portrait, which denaturalizes the depicted character drawing attention to its artifact quality.

According to Marc Eli Blanchard, description is a system that enables us to modify a common frame of reference and to introduce our own view of the world, even as it makes us share in an essentially *visual* experience, "... the purpose of a description is not to make us see the place of the action, so that, we might be able to juxtapose our understanding of it with our understanding of the action itself."<sup>43</sup> Roland Barthes<sup>44</sup> also emphasises the visual aspect of description. According to him, every literary description is a view. We can say, that the enunciator (l'énonciateur) settles himself/herself near the window before describing, not only to get view, but to find what he/she can see by the frame itself: embrasure creates the spectacle. In *Művész szerelem* most of the descriptive parts have the same function: they denaturalize the spectacle, representing an artificial created picture, which refers not to "Nature" but to the text itself. Some descriptions have a frame, or a situation of the viewer, which transforms the visual experience into the work

of art. The following example may prove this self-referential function representing not portraiture but landscape.

On the occasion of an excursion to Tétény (138–140), the narrator depicts the banks of the Danube. “The sharply lightened bank” provides motivation for description: the colours of the landscape (the light green of gleaming waves, the black contours of a fishing boat, the sober colours by greyish smoke) evoke the image of an impressionist landscape. This image is supported by expressions concerning the fine arts: richly coloured picture, background covered by grayish smoke, bridge like a huge black band breaking the greenish blue of the transparent sky, or white houses mottled the greenfield. Although the reader realises the landscape by putting the details of the picture together, not only as a spatial factor, but a temporal one also influences the view. As the boat is passing on the river new elements of the landscape appear: “here and there”, “appeared”, “emerged”, and “rode along the water” mark the changing of the space in vision so that the description is primarily cinematic. At least three times we can realize zoom-effects in the depicted vision giving a closer view of different scenes, like a wedding couple in a village, grapewine yards, or gardens with geraniums and daisies. This way, the whole structure of description is built on a narrative mechanism disavowing the realistic illusion.

### Mise en Abyme as Description

The two descriptions below can highlight the peculiar self-referential mode in Justh's novel.

#### 1.

Arzén's gaze runs over the scenery of town park. He is the focalizer, but description is narrated by the narrator's voice. First, the motivation for description can be demonstrated: “He perceived the landscape, and forgot Anne for a minute.” Arzén gets impressions from Nature, but he is simultaneously regarding the view lying before him in a denaturalized way:

...Their blackish trunks were lining the light background of the green field. Here and there, tiny, bursting leaves of a big willow or poplar painted points of green in the light, transparent azure of the sky. The lawn was dotted by dark violet lillies and white daisies. Light, hardly sensible odour was spreading in the air. In some bushes song-bird was heard modestly in a low voice, because he might get frightened by people's distant murmuring, or maybe in order to bring his voice in harmony with the fine drawing of bushes, trees, and lawn<sup>45</sup> (10–11).

Certain details of description above involve the terms of the arts: blackish trunks were lining the light background, tiny points of green leaves in the light, transparent azure of the sky, the lawn was dotted by dark violet. An impressionist landscape is narrated here with its pointilist technique and light contours, but it comprises sensory elements as well. The effect of voices and smells also makes impression: “modestly in a low voice”, “people’s murmuring”, “sensible odour of lillies and daisies”, and the like.

Although it is the narrator who depicts the landscape, Arzén’s point of view provides the centre of focalization. Gérard Genette draws up a typology of focalization<sup>46</sup> and he defines the focalization as a narrative segment that is not permanent in the course of narration. The internal focalization is a presentation of events restricted to the point of view of one or more focal characters; it is *fixed* if the focalization is restricted to a simple character, *variable* if the focalization is between several focal characters, and *multiple* if the presentation of the same events is seen through several focal characters. Genette’s typology was commented and criticized by many theoreticians in consideration of the confusion between focalization and narration in connection with the terms of mood and voice.<sup>47</sup>

According to Mieke Bal, every narrative enunciation contains a focalizer and a focalized object. When a place is represented by a visual image, the narrator describes what he/she can see, or he/she could see when he/she was younger. This provides a peculiar importance to the subject of the view which Bal designates by the term *focalization*.<sup>48</sup> It “establishes the link of perception between subject and object. Ascending in body, the focalizer descends in vision”.<sup>49</sup>

In the description quoted above the motivation (“he perceived the landscape”) is the moment when the narrator transfers the power of focalization to the character. Focalization is fixed because it became restricted to Arzén’s point of view. The visual image of town park is becoming artificial through Arzén’s eye. The explicit allusion to an impressionist painting creates the frame of description which enables the reader to identify the description as a work of art. Therefore, the elements of description are forming an ekphrasis reflecting on its own composition.

## 2.

This, this is modern! These factory chimnies lining the grayish-blue sky dirty with smoke and steam, the wet and fummy suburban air which softens the contours and makes the picture mysterious and tender, those bloomy, transparent colours... here and there a line, bright green, a perfect blur! Then those huge striking brick-red announcements over there at the corner... and the people, these workers wearing gray and blue jackets ... All remind me to my favourite painters, the Flamish masters ... We have to paint this ...<sup>50</sup> (92–93).

Paula builds her landscape by pictorial elements: chimnies lining the grayish-blue sky, the contours, mysterious and tender picture, bright green line, a perfect blur, and so on. She regards the spectacle as the model of modern art. Paula stands on a tramway leaning against its side to see the view. She says with full of enthusiasm: "It's the outset of modern landscape! This is what I am feeling!" (92) The situation frames the description and creates the perspective of Paula's point of view. She sees the scenery from above. First, her gaze wanders away into the distance when she is regarding the chimnies and grayish-blue sky dirty with smoke and steam. Then she is looking at the whole "mysterious and tender picture" in all. It is followed by a zoom-effect: the announcement at the corner on the wall, and workers wearing gray and blue jackets. The view from the tramway is intentionally represented as a painting because Paula wants to see this view as a work of art to demonstrate for her company what a modern landscape should be like.

Paula's *ars poetica* is based on impressionist style. When she is the focal character, description is always dominated by narrated impressionist elements; in this way, the subjecticist idea "What you feel put on the canvas!" (39, 68) is illustrated in the text. In the novel the descriptive parts occasionally illustrate the focalizers' aesthetical taste. The description of the Central Railway Station (52–53) is a good example for this device. The picture of the railway station is narrated through the naturalist writer's eye: microrealistical effects of voices, noises, rustles ("shuffling steps" "dying song", "rough laugh", "ringing of tramways", "wheels of rolling cars")<sup>51</sup> express how busy and noisy a railway station could be. At the same time, the romantic painter Ernő is watching the same scene as a delighted landscape of an alpine scenery.

When Paula's point of view controls the description (45, 92–93, 95, 175), the narrative is dominated by expressions of shades of colours, tones and impressions. She declares: "it is strange, how sometimes some landscapes... and some voices can express our impressions"<sup>52</sup> (117). We can conceive this phrase as a *mise en abyme* of descriptive parts in the novel: Paula's declaration draws the reader's attention to the process of how descriptive parts are being built in the text. They illustrate the focal characters' personality, which can not be separated from their aesthetical ideas in the context of aesthetical disputes.

Mieke Bal examines a type of description that can be considered as *mise en abyme*, or mirroring text, because the significance of the metaphor going through the description includes the whole subject of the novel.<sup>53</sup> In this sense, the descriptive parts in *Művész szerelem* can be regarded as *mise en abyme*, because they involve the whole subject of the novel, that is the aesthetical disputes between different artistic movements (impressionism, romanticism, and naturalism) demonstrating the focalizer's theory of art. In this way, landscape and portraits illustrate the priority of the artist's personality in art. *Mise en abyme* can be regarded as a form of self-reflection "when a part of a text states something about the whole text

itself, highlighting it or interpreting it, like a little mirror, which is sometimes imperceptible, mirroring quasi inwards.<sup>54</sup> In Justh's novel there is no mirror text, because we cannot read Arzén Gilady's novel: we are just informed about the process of it being written. Despite the lack of embedded text we can point out the thematical reflexivity between Arzén's formal and thematical conceptions and its realisation in *Művész szerelem*. This reflexivity requires retrospective reading of the text. Reflexivity suggests that Justh's novel supposedly is the same as Arzén's novel, which means a virtual homonymy between a character and author. Besides these self-referential levels the descriptive parts also provide a mirroring aspect. A kind of pictorial view appears on different levels in the novel. When Arzén describes people he uses pictorial terminology: Ernő, his best friend "remains pure gold" during his analytical process (35), "he sees the contours of arts, just like those of people. Some descriptions are metaphorical like the one in which the Danube would be the border between past and future in era of the Hungarian Millennium (138–140); others refer to descriptions themselves involving de-naturalized elements to construct an ekphrasis sometimes according to the focal character's aesthetical taste. This way, the priority of the subjectivist idea demonstrates the subject matter of the novel.

*Művész szerelem* is an exception among Justh's "illustrative novels", the role of descriptive parts can be conceived as a modern technical device in European fiction at the end of the nineteenth century. Seeing that *Művész szerelem* is a forgotten author's forgotten novel, its literary values provide further possibilities to criticism.

### Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Zsigmond Justh, *Művész szerelem* [Artist's Love]. Budapest: Pallas, 1888.
- <sup>2</sup> Gábor Gángó's postscript in *A pénz legendája és más kisregények* [The legend of money and other novels]. Budapest: Unikornis, 2000.
- <sup>3</sup> László Bóka's, Endre Illés's, and Gábor Halász' essays in *Nyugat*.
- <sup>4</sup> Gábor Halász discovered Justh's *Journal* and had it published in the 1940s. His essays are very significant in Justh's reception (*Magyar századvég*, 1937; *Magyar álmodozók*, 1939; *Justh Párizsban*, 1941). György Bodnár, on the other hand, preferred Justh's short novels (*Új Auróra* 1987/3).
- <sup>5</sup> Béla G. Németh, *Szemközt egy legendával* [Face to face with a legend], in *Századutóról-századelőről* [End of the century, beginning of the century], Budapest: Magvető, 1959.
- <sup>6</sup> Imre Bori, *Varázslók és mákvirágok* [Magicians and poppies]. Újvidék: Fórum Könyvkiadó, 1979, 122–267; his essay on *Művész szerelem*, In: *Prózatörténeti tanulmányok* [Studies in the History of Prose]. Budapest, 1993.
- <sup>7</sup> The most important works are: G. Genette, *Figures III*. Paris: Édition du Seuil, 1972; G. Genette, *Nouveau discours du récit*, Paris: Seuil, 1983; Paul deMan, *Allegories of Reading*, New Heaven–London: Yale University Press, 1979; A. Compagnon, *Proust entre deux siècles*, Paris: Seuil, 1989; Mieke Bal, *Images littéraires ou Comment lire visuellement Proust*, Québec: XYZ éditeur, 1997.

- <sup>8</sup> Sándor Márai realised that they both worked in the same conditions with the same sensibility and with only a decade separating them from each other. Both of them were wealthy, and suffered from incurable illness, and Justh's *Journal of Paris* mirrors the same social milieu and the same atmosphere as Proust's novels. See: Sándor Márai, "A dandy és világa", in *Pesti Hírlap* 1941/33.
- <sup>9</sup> Zsigmond Justh, *Művész szerelem*, Budapest: Pallas, 1888, 180. "Egy modern szerelem története az egész. Meg szeretném mutatni, hogyan engedelmeskedünk ma annak az örök törvénynek, amely fenntartja a világot. Ki akarom mutatni a tudás, az intellektuális fejlődés hatását a szerelemre. Ki akarom mutatni, hogyan gyöngíti a szerelmet a szellemi előrehaladás. Maga a regény formája megfelel a század követelményeinek; rövid, és szorosan tárgyhöz ragaszkodik; kitérések nincsenek benne." The quoted texts in this essay are translated by the author.
- <sup>10</sup> Péter Pór, *Konzervatív reformtörekvések a századforduló irodalmában* [Conservative efforts at reform in the literature of the turn of the century]. Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1971.
- <sup>11</sup> Imre Bori, "Justh Zsigmond." In Bori, *Varázslók és mákvirágok*.
- <sup>12</sup> Imre Bori highlighted this concurrence in *Prózatörténeti tanulmányok*.
- <sup>13</sup> "... magasabb rendű művész az, ki Socrates fejét festi meg, mint aki egy érett görögdinnyét mázol" (40).
- <sup>14</sup> György Bodnár, "Tételek között szorongó tárgyiasság és impresszionizmus: Justh Zsigmond" [Objectivity and Impressionism trapped among precepts], *Új Auróra* [New Aurora], 1987/3: 68–78.
- <sup>15</sup> *Journaux intimes et cornets* publié par *La Nouvelle Revue Française* (Paris) 1975: 5–18; Condeberque-Lrecht. "Le journal parisien de Sigismond Justh Un ami de ma jeunesse", *Nouvelle revue de Hongrie* (Budapest), avril 1940: 264–273.
- <sup>16</sup> *Justh Zsigmond naplója és levelei*. Budapest: Szépirodalmi Könyvkiadó, 1977, 59–60. "Mind a kettő a preraffaelisztikus éra hatása alatt. Költőik: Swinburn, Dante Gabriel Rossetti. Festőik: (régiek közül) a primitívek: Giotto, Fra Angelico, Bellini, azután a spanyol iskola és Leonardo da Vinci és Tizian arcképei. Tout à fait mon affaire ça! [Ez nekem is teljesen megfelel!] Mind a ketten Laurens tanítványai."
- <sup>17</sup> *Párizsi napló*, 211: "a legszubtilisabb kor legrafináltabb s legbetegebb festője".
- <sup>18</sup> Katalin Gellér, "Justh Zsigmond Párizsi naplójának képzőművészeti vonatkozásai" [Artistic aspects of Zsigmond Justh's Parisian journal], *Művészettörténeti Értesítő* [Art History News] 1983/4.
- <sup>19</sup> Justh describes Antokolsky's atelier in this context in *Párizsi Napló* (23, 82, 112–113).
- <sup>20</sup> "az, akit csak saját érzésvilágán keresztül érdekel az élet".
- <sup>21</sup> András Tóth, "Justh Zsigmond naplója és levelei" [The journal and letters of Zsigmond Justh]. *Irodalomtörténet* [Literary History] 1979/3: 673–678.
- <sup>22</sup> *Mednyánszky László naplója*. Budapest: Képzőművészeti Alap Kiadóvállalata, 1960.
- <sup>23</sup> Catalogue of Mednyánszky exhibition in the Hungarian National Gallery – Erzsébet Király, 'A "komor szépség" festője', in *Mednyánszky kiállítása a Magyar Nemzeti Galériában 2003–2004*. Budapest: Kossuth Kiadó, 2003. (A Magyar Nemzeti Galéria kiadványai 2003/4). – "A legmélyebb s egyúttal a legnehezebben érthető festőink között."
- <sup>24</sup> "A kihalt táj sárgás tónusát csak itt-ott törte meg egy-egy tarka kendős, ibolya-szedő leány, vagy egy-egy a múlás színeibe öltözött öreg anyó, kik meggörnyedve czipelték rőzse-kötegeiket hazafelé.  
– Istenem, milyen szomorú itt minden! – szólt Arzén.  
– Nagyon hangulatos! Nézze csak, milyen szép képet adna az az öreg anyó, a rőzsével a hátán, sárga-sárgán, akár csak egy eau forte." (175–176)

- <sup>25</sup> Mieke Bal, *Over-Writing as Un-writing: Descriptions, World-Making, and Novelistic Time*. Bal's lecture at Eötvös Loránd University, Department of Comparative Literature, Budapest, 09/05/2001.
- <sup>26</sup> Gérard Genette, *Figure II. Frontière du récit*. Édition du Seuil, 1969, 58.
- <sup>27</sup> Philippe Hamon, *Introduction à l'analyse du descriptif*. Paris: Hachette, 1981.
- <sup>28</sup> Mieke Bal, *Over-Writing as Un-writing: Descriptions, World-Making, and Novelistic Time*. Bal's lecture at Eötvös Loránd University, Department of Comparative Literature, Budapest, 09/05/2001.
- <sup>29</sup> Marc Eli Blanchard, *Description: Sign, Self, Desire. Critical Theory in the Wake of Semiotics*. The Hague, The Netherlands: Mouton Publishers, 1980, 18.
- <sup>30</sup> Mieke Bal, *Description as Narration. On Story-Telling. Essays in Narratology*. California: Polebridge Press, 1991.
- <sup>31</sup> Marc Eli Blanchard, *Description: Sign, Self, Desire. Critical Theory in the Wake of Semiotic*. The Hague, The Netherlands: Mouton Publishers, 1980, 182.
- <sup>32</sup> Gábor Halász, *Válogatott írásai* [Selected writings]. Budapest: Magvető, 1959.
- <sup>33</sup> Greist Georgia Lenart, *The Reception of French Naturalism in the Hungarian Novel*. The University of Wisconsin, Madison, Ph.D. 1975:126–127.
- <sup>34</sup> Jenő Péterffy, *Válogatott művei* [Selected works]. Budapest: Szépirodalmi Könyvkiadó, 1962, 604–608.
- <sup>35</sup> Zsigmond Justh's letter to József Szinnyi the Elder (5 March 1889). In: *Justh Zsigmond naplója és levelei*. Budapest: Szépirodalmi Könyvkiadó, 1977.
- <sup>36</sup> "Nékem egypár dolog eszembe jut a távoli pátriából, a 'meleg' fogadtatás, amellyel új könyvemet látták" *Justh Zsigmond naplója és levelei*. Budapest: Szépirodalmi Könyvkiadó, 1977, 248.
- <sup>37</sup> Elemér Császár, *A magyar regény története* [History of the Hungarian novel]. Budapest: Királyi Magyar Egyetemi Nyomda, 1939.
- <sup>38</sup> György Bodnár, *Új Auróra* 1987/3.
- <sup>39</sup> "Amikor 'leír', mintha tollat cserélne, mert közlései és analízisei szikadtabbak, szárazabbak, stílustalanabbak. Tájékepei tehát a 'megszokott iránnyal' szemben újdonságok." In: Imre Bori, *Varázslók és mákvirágok*, 163–164.
- <sup>40</sup> Although Béla Németh G. wrote a critical essay about Justh's overesteemed place in Hungarian literary history, he also enhanced the values of Justh's descriptions. Béla G. Németh, *Szemközt egy legendával*, in Béla G. Németh, *Századutóról-századelőről*, Budapest: Magvető Könyvkiadó, 1985, 220–236. Other critics who layed stress on the values of Justh's descriptive style: Aurél Kárpáti, *Justh Zsigmond*, in Kárpáti, A. *A búsképpű lovag* [The sad faced knight]. Budapest: A Tálto kiadása, 1920, 73–79; László Elek, *Justh Zsigmond*. Gyula: 1964.
- <sup>41</sup> "A tavaszi napfény beragyogta egész alakját. Arcza a byzanci aranyalakra festett szent képekre emlékeztetett. Hosszukás arczéle, keskeny, mandola vágású szemei, sovány, hosszú lecsüggő karjai, szájába lógó orra, mintha stylizáltak lettek volna, de szemeiből bágyadt, finomult érzékiség s mély érzés beszélt" (10).
- <sup>42</sup> Mieke Bal, *Reading Rembrandt. Beyond the Wold-Image Opposition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991, 271.
- <sup>43</sup> Blanchard, 186.
- <sup>44</sup> Roland Barthes, *La description littéraire de l'Antiquité à Roland Barthes: une anthologie*. Paris: Éditions Macula, 1991, 251.
- <sup>45</sup> "... Feketés törzseik megvonalták a zöld rét világos alapját. Itt-ott egy nagy fűz, vagy nyárfa finom, picziny, fakadozó levélkéi pontozták zöldre az ég világos, áttetsző azúrját. A pázsitot sötét lilaszin liliomok és fehér százzsorszépek tarkították. A levegőben könnyű, alig érezhető illat áradozott. Egy-egy bokorban énekes madár szólt szerényen, alig hallhatóan, tán mert



megriadt az embereknek a távolból ide hallatszó morájától, vagy tán azért, hogy a bokrok, fák és pázsit finom rajzával összhangban legyen.”

46 Gérard Genette, *Figures III*. Paris: Seuil, 1972.

47 Genette reflected on these comments in *Nouveau discours du récit*. Paris: Seuil, 1983. Monika Fludernik also examines the confusion of terms, but she completely rejects the relevance of the category “focalization” because it relates to figural discours. She blames Genette for using the lexeme as a metaphoric extension of the grammatical term voice (voix). “Interpretations of “who sees” and “who speaks” are therefore more or less based on the same type of linguistic evidence. That linguistic evidence is supplemented by perceptual and epistemological parameters – for example, what a character is likely to know or perceive – and by stylistic clues: what is likely to be the narrator’s language or the character’s.” See further problems of the term in Monika Fludernik. “New Wine in Old Bottle? Voice, Focalization, and New Writing”, *New Literary History* 32(3) (Summer 2001), 633.

48 Mieke Bal, *Images littéraires ou Comment lire visuellement Proust*. Québec: XYZ éditeur, 1997, 11.

49 Mieke Bal, *Over-Writing as Un-writing: Descriptions, World-Making, and Novelistic Time*. Bal’s lecture at Eötvös Loránd University, Department of Comparative Literature, Budapest, 09/05/2001.

50 “Ez, ez modern! Ezek a gyárkémények, a mint megvonlazzák a szürkés-kék, füsttől és párából mocskos eget, a külvárosok nedves, gőzös levegője, mely meglágyítja a körvonalakat és sejtelmessé, lágygyá teszi a képet, azok a hamvas, áttetsző színek... itt-ott egy vonal elevenzöld, kitűnő folt! Aztán azok a nagy, kiáltó téglaveres hirdetések amott a sarkon... meg a nép, ezek a munkás emberek szürke és kék zubbonyaikban... Mindez a hollandi mesterekre, az én kedvenc festőimre emlékeztet... Ezt, ezt kell megfestenünk...”

51 “csoszogó léptek,” “elhaló dal,” “durva nevetés,” “tramway-k csengése,” “robogó kocsik kerekerei”.

52 “Furcsa, hogy némelykor egy-egy tájkép... s hozzá egy pár hang mennyire kifejezi lelki állapotunkat”.

53 Mieke Bal, *A leírás mint narráció*. In: *Narratívák 2. Történet és fikció* ed. by Beáta Thomka. Budapest: Kijárat Kiadó, 1998. (Translated from: Mieke Bal. *Description of Narration. On Story-Telling. Essays In: Narratology*. California: Polebridge Press, 1991.)

54 C. György Kálmán, *Te rongyos [elm]élet!* [You ragged thoughts]. Budapest, 1998, 37.



# TRAVERSEE D'UN CERTAIN TERRITOIRE EUROPEEN, D'OUEST EN EST ET « EN REMONTANT LE DANUBE », PAR L'ECRIVAIN HONGROIS PÉTER ESTERHÁZY AUTOUR DE 1989

SOPHIE AUDE

Ecole doctorale de littérature comparée de Paris IV, France  
et ELTE-Budapest  
Hongrie

A travers un pseudo récit de voyage le long du Danube *L'Œillade de la comtesse Hahn-Hahn* (1990) de P. Esterházy met en cause les clichés (littéraires) attachés à l'identité nationale par rapport à une identité régionale aussi problématique et à un modèle donné comme universel et aussi démythifié (l'Europe). La réception de ce texte à l'étranger nous interroge sur la possibilité de traduire l'expression d'un spécifique étroitement lié à la langue de la création littéraire.

**Mots-clefs:** territoire, Europe, identité nationale, figure du voyageur, rôle de l'écrivain, transgression, citation, tradition littéraire, espace, métonymie, poétique du fleuve, Est-Ouest, Europe centrale, désintégration, appartenance, réception (nationale et à l'étranger), imagologie, traduction

La littérature hongroise est, sans doute plus que d'autres, marquée par la tension entre « identité nationale » et « identité européenne ». Si la question même de sa définition peut se poser en ces termes, c'est en partie à cause du lien singulièrement fort qui l'unit à l'histoire particulière de la Hongrie dans celle du continent. Pour le pays confronté aux dominations ottomane, habsbourgeoise ou – et cette énumération est déjà en elle-même un cliché sur lequel nous reviendrons – de même que pour la langue isolée entre des aires linguistiques slaves, latines ou autres, les écrivains et leurs œuvres ont longtemps représenté un élément de continuité et de défense de l'identité nationale. La littérature et les attentes face à celle-ci se trouvent donc traditionnellement prises entre, d'une part un désir de reconnaissance de leur universalité, d'appartenance à la littérature mondiale, et d'autre part l'exigence de l'expression d'une spécificité nationale. Si la littérature contemporaine ne correspond déjà plus à ce schéma, en le mettant justement en cause et en interrogeant cet héritage historique et littéraire national, la façon dont la rupture historique de 1989 marque les œuvres des écrivains contemporains ainsi que leur rapport aux représentations de l'identité nationale, à la question de la définition nationale ou autre de leur littérature, nous intéresse particulièrement.

Notre contribution à la réflexion sur « l'idée européenne dans les réalités d'Europe centrale » consistera donc en une lecture d'un texte de l'écrivain hongrois contemporain Péter Esterházy. Son œuvre, dont la publication commence dès le début des années quatre-vingts est en effet marquée par l'exploration et la mise en question du passé historique national et familial (*Harmonia Caelestis*, Édition revue et corrigée<sup>1</sup>), des mythes nationaux (*Petite pornographie hongroise*<sup>2</sup>), de la littérature nationale et de la littérature en général comme mode de production d'images et de représentations (*Roman de production, Introduction aux Belles-Lettres*<sup>3</sup>), et enfin des sédimentations dans la langue, à travers des clichés, des métaphores figées, des références, de ces nœuds encore non dénoués de l'histoire nationale.

Le texte auquel nous nous intéresserons ici, intitulé *Hahn-Hahn grófnő pillantása, lefelé a Dunán*, paraît à Budapest en 1990<sup>4</sup> et en France dans une traduction d'Agnès Jáfás en 1999, sous le titre de *L'Œillade de la comtesse Hahn-Hahn, en descendant le Danube*.<sup>5</sup> La lecture que nous en proposerons suivra deux grandes directions. Ce qui nous intéresse en premier lieu dans ce texte est qu'il fait se croiser d'une part un voyage d'Ouest en Est à travers un certain territoire européen, et d'autre part une date, 1989, qui a signifié pour la Hongrie, comme pour les autres pays du bloc soviétique, tout à la fois une libération, une rupture et de profondes remises en questions. Ce texte, dont la détermination du genre est problématique, procède donc en partie de la rencontre des dimensions du temps et de l'espace dans le texte littéraire, de la rencontre dans le territoire (ou plutôt dans le voyage explorant la réalité et les virtualités de celui-ci) des problèmes liés à l'histoire, ainsi qu'à une identité personnelle et familiale, collective et nationale. Comme dans le voyage qui conduit des sources du Danube en Forêt Noire allemande au delta du fleuve sur les rives roumaines de la mer Noire, en passant évidemment par la Hongrie mais aussi par Vienne, Belgrade, etc., dans toutes ces questions se retrouve, naturellement, la tension entre « identités nationales » et « identité européenne » qui sert de titre à ce colloque. L'autre aspect sur lequel portera plus particulièrement notre attention est le voyage, en quelque sorte à rebours de l'œuvre elle-même, à travers les problèmes posés par sa réception et ses interprétations en Hongrie et à l'étranger, ainsi que sa traduction. En effet, l'importance déjà évoquée du lien de la littérature hongroise à son histoire nationale et à la spécificité de celle-ci pose la question de sa traductibilité, de sa possibilité d'être comprise à l'étranger.

Nous commencerons par présenter le texte en nous interrogeant sur ses enjeux et ses modalités, sur ses définitions problématiques : s'agit-il d'une fiction ? d'un roman ? à travers lui quel rôle est dévolu à l'écrivain et à la littérature, à l'époque contemporaine et dans les interrogations qui traversent celle-ci ? Nous observerons ensuite quelles images du pays et de la région se forment – et se déforment – au cours de ce voyage dans l'espace danubien et l'histoire de celui-ci ainsi que,

surtout, dans l'espace du texte. Enfin, nous évoquerons les problèmes de réception, de traduction et d'interprétation de ce texte dans sa langue et son pays d'origine ainsi que, « en remontant le Danube », en Europe occidentale.

# **1. La comtesse borgne, le voyageur et l'écrivain sont sur un bateau : enjeux et modalités du texte**

## **(1)a Vrai roman ou faux journal, la question de la fiction**

Dès son titre, *L'Œillade de la comtesse Hahn-Hahn, en descendant le Danube* se situe dans une tension entre les dimensions référentielles et fictionnelles du texte littéraire, ainsi que dans une certaine indétermination générique. En effet, à côté du nom plutôt énigmatique du personnage, à cause duquel on serait tenté de situer ce texte dans le champ du romanesque, le nom du « Danube » désigne un référent géographique, physique et culturel, bien connu. Dès la première page, des indices de l'intention plutôt fictionnelle du texte (« J'avais un lointain oncle, fantastique et mystérieux », p. 7) ou plutôt référentielle (« au début de l'été 51 [...] on l'exila sur la Hortobágy, conformément au modèle soviétique », p. 7) se côtoient. Nous verrons en fait que la seule intention que nous puissions avec certitude reconnaître à ce texte est justement celle de jouer avec les attentes du lecteur, qu'il suscite en se présentant tantôt comme un document et tantôt comme une fable, et en ramenant toujours l'un et l'autre au contexte historique de leur production – c'est-à-dire à cette époque du changement de régime, en 1989–1990.

Le texte n'en propose pas moins cependant une sorte de « contrat de lecture »<sup>6</sup> inscrit dans ses modalités narratives, toutes contradictoires qu'elles puissent paraître. Le texte relève en grande partie d'une situation de narration qui définit un cadre fictionnel, toujours débordé, comme nous le verrons. Cette situation de narration est celle d'un échange entre un « Voyageur-à-gages » et son « Commanditaire » communiquant par des « télégrammes » qui constituent une partie importante du texte, celui-ci se présentant alors comme une sorte de journal de voyage. La narration est donc tantôt assumée par le « Voyageur » lui-même, à la première personne, dans ces télégrammes qui font d'une ligne à plusieurs pages, tantôt par un narrateur extradiégétique qui désigne à la troisième personne le « Voyageur » et les autres personnages. Cependant, outre l'entretien d'une certaine confusion entre l'identité du « Voyageur » (à la fois narrateur et personnage) et celle de l'auteur, plusieurs passages échappent à ce cadre fictionnel, quand la première personne est explicitement celle de l'auteur Péter Esterházy réfléchissant sur sa propre situation et celle de son pays au moment de l'écriture de ce texte.<sup>7</sup> Autant dans ces passages que dans ceux qui appartiennent au cadre de la fiction, le texte est donc ponctué de références autobiographiques ou historiques, puisqu'une des

autres caractéristiques du texte est de mêler, avec un certain goût pour le manie-  
ment des anachronismes, les histoires familiale et nationale à la trame très dis-  
tendue ou du moins fort peu linéaire de ce récit de voyage. Les références à des da-  
tes ou à des époques historiques sont donc très souvent faites d'une façon qui  
semble anecdotique mais qui a pour effet de resituer en permanence ce voyage le  
long du Danube dans une recherche de la compréhension de l'histoire très troublée  
de ce territoire traversé par le fleuve. Par exemple une description du Danube, au  
moment où Voyageur passe la frontière entre la Hongrie et l'ex-Yougoslavie,  
donne lieu à ce commentaire, *entre parenthèses* :

Le Danube est vorace dans ces contrées. (Janvier 1942, novembre  
1944, et ainsi de suite, des trous pratiqués dans la glace, Juifs et  
Serbes mitraillés et immergés ...) (p. 236).

Les références à l'histoire semblent donc le plus souvent se faire de façon pure-  
ment incidente, comme ici, et ce, qu'elles concernent le passé comme dans  
l'exemple précédent, ou le présent. La référence aux événements de 1989 est ainsi  
mêlée aux notes de voyage, dans le chapitre 18 intitulé « Journal de bord » :

À ce moment-là – quand on arriva à Orth ? – l'Europe était en train de  
changer ; on se rendit compte que le fini n'était pas fini et que l'His-  
toire n'était pas une bouteille de lait gelée, ce dont elle avait l'air jus-  
qu'alors (p. 159).

Les références autobiographiques sont liées de la même façon anecdotique à la  
progression du voyage le long du Danube et au récit qui en est fait, dans lequel rien  
n'est vraiment anecdote puisque tout, et plus particulièrement l'histoire familiale  
du narrateur (qui en cela ne peut manquer d'être confondu avec l'auteur<sup>8</sup>), se rap-  
porte à l'histoire de cet espace défini par le fleuve. La description du personnage  
qui donne son nom au second chapitre<sup>9</sup> et que Voyageur rencontre à Vienne donne  
lieu à cette digression :

Nelly était issue de la famille la plus huppée de la Monarchie, ses  
aïeux causèrent beaucoup de torts et d'ennuis à la Hongrie – parfois  
de mèche avec mes aïeux à moi. Pour moi tout fait partie de l'histoire  
familiale. Nelly elle-même ressemblait à la Monarchie au sens où  
elle était un agglomérat d'éléments disparates (p. 14).

Les deux dimensions, historique et généalogique, de la quête de mémoire et  
d'identité se rejoignent d'ailleurs en formant tout un réseau de comparaisons avec  
le fleuve, qui donne aussi sa forme à l'écriture, essentiellement marquée, comme  
nous avons déjà pu le voir, par la digression, mais aussi par les enchâssements  
dans le récit principal de micro-histoires ou de portraits de personnages, choix sty-  
listiques qui favorisent le va-et-vient entre histoires individuelles et histoire col-  
lective.

### (1)b La figure du voyageur, le rôle de l'écrivain

Le texte d'Esterházy déçoit donc les attentes qu'il suscite. Quand il se présente comme un roman, la clôture du cadre fictionnel que nous avons décrit est aussitôt rompue et investie par des références à l'actualité historique et politique, ou à la situation de l'écrivain dans ce contexte. Quand il se présente comme un document, les données qu'il évoque servent aussitôt de point de départ à des affabulations. La notion de fiction n'est donc pas, semble-t-il, le meilleur outil pour observer ce texte qui ne signale d'autre appartenance que celle à l'espace de l'écriture et des processus de son élaboration. *L'Œillade de la comtesse Hahn-Hahn* apparaît ainsi comme une composition, plus souvent discordante qu'harmonieuse, à partir de différents discours sur l'histoire et de différents « genre[s] » qui la représentent.<sup>10</sup> La prise en compte de ce fait stylistique essentiel nous incite donc à ne pas départager définitivement les tendances du texte à la référentialité et à l'invention, puisque c'est à partir de telles contradictions qu'il se construit.

Cette contradiction s'incarne aussi, d'une certaine façon, dans cette figure de narrateur à la fois écrivain et voyageur, puisque en tant que « Voyageur-à-gages » il est chargé de faire la relation de son voyage à son « Commanditaire ». Le recul critique de l'écrivain par rapport à son propre pays et à toute l'aire culturelle qu'il traverse et à laquelle il appartient est donc redoublé par la distance du voyageur qui rompt justement avec toutes ces appartenances le temps du voyage. La mobilité et l'extériorité du voyageur qui le rendent marginal par rapport aux paysages et aux sociétés qu'il rencontre et par rapport à son propre pays donnent lieu à de fréquents changements de perspective, à des déplacements de point de vue, grâce auxquels le narrateur-Voyageur peut transgresser tous les tabous et toutes les valeurs les plus immuables de son pays.<sup>11</sup> L'ironie – plus ou moins féroce ou amère – est le mode privilégié de ces transgressions, comme dans ce passage :

Tchao ! (Il faut entendre : brave peuple, terre libre, pays charmant – je dois prendre congé de toi, ton souvenir restera indélébile dans ma mémoire et dans mon cœur, flop, floc. Tout ceci se passa environ à la balise fluviokilométrique 1433 (p. 234).

Ces transgressions résultent aussi de ce qu'on peut appeler des procédés carnavalesques,<sup>12</sup> par lesquels les qualités nationales les plus hautes ou les plus spirituelles sont dégradées par leur confrontation à des éléments beaucoup plus prosaïques, ce qui se produit par exemple lorsque le parfum d'Occident de l'oncle Roberto est évoqué :

Il fleurait l'Occident. Si je le formule ainsi, c'est parce qu'il y a une odeur hongroise. L'appeler « malodorante », ce serait grossièreté et ingratitude de ma part, et pourtant, conscients de nos valeurs, nous devrions tout de même assumer tout cet ail de basse cuisine – si l'on n'y veille on ira jusqu'où ? Petit pays qui a tant souffert (p. 25).

Il est intéressant d'observer que ces transgressions se font souvent par le détournement de motifs ou de citations du patrimoine littéraire national, comme dans le passage suivant :

Dans sa jeunesse il eut des velléités littéraires et avec ses premiers textes publiés dans son pays – appelé Hongrie, habité par des Hongrois parlant hongrois, plus précisément s'investissant en Hongrois, mais aussi qui mangent hongrois, mordent de la viande hongroise à belles dents hongroises, aiment en hongrois, dont les mains hongroises reposent sur des cuisses hongroises, qui naissent en hongrois et meurent en hongrois, où de la lumière hongroise tombent sur leurs berceaux hongrois, de même que de la terre hongroise (velours hongrois) tombe sur leurs cercueils hongrois (...) – avec ses premiers textes donc, il réussit à se faire un nom, mais lorsqu'il s'avéra qu'il était né pour être voyageur, il se fit voyageur (p. 39).

Dans ce passage, la référence proliférante, redondante et comique parce qu'exagérée, au « pays » de Voyageur est en partie fondée sur une citation de l'*Exhortation* du poète Mihály Vörösmarty, citation qui a le statut d'hymne national et qui est toujours considérée et prononcée avec sérieux, et un pathos inscrit dans le texte même.<sup>13</sup> Mais cet iconoclasme relève aussi d'une tradition littéraire dont l'ascendance est à plusieurs reprises revendiquée dans le texte. Le voyageur passant les frontières, autant que l'écrivain se faisant plus volontiers le critique que l'apologiste de son « petit pays qui a tant souffert », se donne pour modèles, en matière de patriotisme, les écrivains Heinrich Heine (« plus il invective sa nation digne d'invectives, plus il l'aime », p. 19) et Thomas Bernhard (« en affaires patriotiques, c'est tout de même Thomas Bernhard qui fait autorité », p. 209). Au-delà de tout ce qui éloigne ces deux figures l'une de l'autre et de notre auteur, elles ont en commun un rapport pour le moins distancé et très critique à leurs nations respectives.

Une certaine conception du rôle de l'écrivain se dégage donc de toutes ces descriptions. Il apparaît dans le texte et à travers toutes ces figures comme étant à la fois le conservateur et le « metteur en question » des valeurs nationales redécouvertes et travaillées dans un langage littéraire, lui-même fondé essentiellement sur des jeux de mise en tension, de déplacements, de décalages féconds. C'est en effet dans le lexique, les tournures, les images, les métaphores figées qu'Esterházy trouve son matériau et lit la mémoire historique. Son écriture travaille donc en même temps à la recherche et à la destruction d'une certaine tradition des représentations de l'identité nationale. Ce choix de travailler contre et avec l'héritage linguistique et littéraire de sa langue place l'œuvre d'Esterházy dans un rapport particulier avec le lecteur, puisque cette langue qui est ainsi exposée, creusée, retournée, mise en scène, déguisée est aussi la langue quotidienne et la mémoire de ses lecteurs, avec qui l'auteur se trouve donc engagé dans un étroit dialogue.



### (1)c L'espace et le regard comme outils herméneutiques

Après avoir évoqué le jeu du texte sur son appartenance au domaine de la fiction ou de la référence, puis la conception du rôle de l'écrivain, particulièrement mis en abyme dans ce texte qui, tout en brouillant les pistes de la compréhension, montre les processus de son élaboration, nous devons parler de l'importance des représentations d'espaces ou de paysages, qui sont aussi un élément essentiel des enjeux et modalités de ce texte en particulier d'Esterházy. De même qu'il découvre dans les pans figés du langage des noyaux de sens (ou de non-sens), notre auteur, avec son personnage de « Voyageur-à-gages » et écrivain, relève dans les strates des paysages, dans les formes et l'organisation des espaces parcourus, des traces d'une identité problématique.

Le voyage (compris comme thème littéraire) implique, ou du moins favorise le croisement des dimensions de l'espace et du temps dans le texte. En effet, à cause d'une histoire nationale marquée, comme nous l'avons déjà dit, par des ruptures mettant en péril l'unité et l'identité de la nation, les territoires perdus de celle-ci sont investis d'une forte charge sentimentale, comme si ce qui était menacé par l'histoire et dans le temps était conservé dans les paysages ou les représentations d'un territoire idéal, eux-mêmes cultivés par une certaine tradition littéraire. Pour contester autant que pour exprimer ce lien entre histoire et territoire, le narrateur se plaît à confondre les domaines ou les termes de la géographie et de l'histoire, faisant par exemple d'une « description hygrométrique » (qui n'en est d'ailleurs pas vraiment une) un « résumé de l'histoire des cent dernières années » (p. 20).

C'est en effet en parcourant l'espace que le narrateur rencontre différentes strates de l'histoire marquées dans les paysages comme dans un palimpseste, pour qui veut bien les voir et ne pas se laisser aveugler par les surfaces des clichés trop connus. Ce passage du chapitre 11, dans lequel apparaît le motif du palimpseste, témoigne de cette mise en question du regard et de la perception qui traverse tout le texte :

[...] au lieu de suivre, comme prévu, le fleuve encore jeunet et de m'arrêter au monastère de Beuron chez les doctes moines qui percent à jour les secrets des vieux palimpsestes, écritures grattées, effacées du premier texte qui avait figuré sur le parchemin manuscrit (si l'on veut c'est un des regards de l'œil aveugle de la comtesse Hahn-Hahn), au lieu de lever mes yeux sur le château de l'autoritaire Wildenstein, au lieu de faire mon boulot [...], au lieu d'admettre, à contre cœur, les prétendues beautés – la rangée d'arbres de l'autre rive reflétée dans l'eau lisse, etc. (p. 65).

On voit dans ce passage que ce Voyageur-écrivain s'efforce de résister, dans le voyage et dans l'écriture, tout à la fois aux « beautés » du paysage et aux lieux communs qui leur sont attachés. Pour cela, il exerce tout au long de son parcours

un regard qu'on pourrait dire archéologique,<sup>14</sup> et en même temps démystificateur. Les plus belles illustrations de ce regard – et de l'écriture de ce regard – traversant l'épaisseur des choses et des espaces se trouvent dans les descriptions de la ville de Budapest, au chapitre 19, intitulé « Les villes invisibles », en référence au livre d'Italo Calvino.<sup>15</sup>

Le fait que le texte progresse selon un principe spatial (le voyage le long du Danube), et non selon le déroulement chronologique d'une histoire, favorise aussi évidemment la prégnance de toutes les formes de digression et de métonymie. En effet, seule la coexistence dans l'espace d'objets ou de traces que le regard du Voyageur rencontre, suscite à chaque fois de nouveau son discours, qui mêle ainsi des époques aussi éloignées que celle de la Monarchie austro-hongroise et l'époque contemporaine, les lendemains de la Première guerre mondiale et l'époque des luttes contre les Ottomans, la fin de la Seconde guerre mondiale ou la période socialiste, qui toutes sont évoquées à partir de la rencontre fortuite, au cours du voyage, d'un nom de lieu ou de personne, d'un objet ou d'un mot.

## **2. Images du pays et de la région : déplacements, jeux, retournements et détournements d'Ouest en Est**

### **(2)a Une poétique du fleuve originale**

On aura donc bien compris qu'à travers ce voyage *en descendant le Danube*, c'est la compréhension de cet espace défini par le fleuve, et dans lequel est inscrit son pays, qui intéresse notre auteur. Le Danube, qui est le fil conducteur de ce voyage et de ce texte dont l'absence de linéarité est parfois déconcertante, joue donc un rôle de première importance dans la perception et l'interprétation des espaces traversés, ainsi que dans la production et l'organisation du texte, dont l'un des présupposés est que,

la différence entre l'eau et le fleuve, c'est que ce dernier a une mémoire, un passé, une histoire (p. 23).

Le fleuve apparaît comme schème d'interprétation et de représentation grâce auquel se définit un rapport à l'histoire et au temps, et lui-même est perçu et représenté historiquement. Ce n'est pas la « permanence du fleuve » qui intéresse le narrateur de *L'Éillade de la comtesse Hahn-Hahn*, qualité qui conférerait au paysage une sorte de transcendance, de sentiment d'éternité, et dans lequel on pourrait se reposer des vicissitudes de l'histoire bien plus agitée; tout au contraire, ce sont les qualités d'horizontalité et de mobilité, l'immanence du fleuve qui intéressent ce narrateur. Le Danube apparaît, plutôt que comme un témoin éternel et muet,

comme un rappel permanent de l'histoire, à l'image d'une parole ou d'une mémoire toujours menacée de disparaître et en même temps toujours actuelle, comme ici :

Notre bateau approcha de Novi Sad où l'eau impavide avait jadis emporté des cadavres bouffis dans la direction de Belgrade (p. 234).

La présence du Danube comme instrument de mesure et de perception de l'histoire, en actualisant la mémoire de celle-ci ou en mettant en relation des époques plus ou moins éloignées, tient aussi au fait que le texte soit formé de l'entremêlement de deux récits, de l'évocation de deux voyages, le long du même flauve, à travers les mêmes pays, à deux époques différentes : celle de l'enfance du narrateur dans les années 1960 et l'époque contemporaine de l'écriture du texte dans les années 1989–1990 qui sont celles du changement de régime. Par ce seul fait, le texte enregistre le passage du monde d'un état à un autre, de ce monde organisé (ou désorganisé).

Le Danube est aussi le lien entre les éléments de la région qu'il définit, le dénominateur commun d'un ensemble plutôt hétérogène, dont il permet d'appréhender la diversité, la cohérence et la géométrie variable, en effet, il existe peu de fleuves « qui soi[en]t aussi chargé[s] d'histoire, qui puisse[nt] baigner autant de modes de vie, d'alternatives sociales et de temps » (p. 152). Le Danube, comme « Promenade-mischung » (p. 101), représente une diversité qui est valorisée et présentée comme une richesse, ne serait-ce que par la propension de l'écriture d'Esterházy aux accumulations d'images et de mots, aux inventaires. Deux éléments du paratexte en témoignent aussi, la *Bibliographie (non) utilisée* et l'*Index des noms, des lieux, des thèmes, des personnages, des plantes et des concepts* qui font se rencontrer des références aux aires culturelles française, allemande, slave (russe, « yougoslave », tchèque, bulgare), mais aussi roumaine, turque, et bien sûr hongroise, et qui obligent chaque lecteur à réfléchir à ce qui, au-delà du Danube et de l'ordre alphabétique, rapproche l'« Atlantis » et « Attila (roi des Huns) », « Chatwin (Bruce) » et « Chvéïk », « Gironde (le navire) » et « Goebbels (Joseph Paul) », « Kádár (ère, système) » et « Kafka (Franz) », etc. ... Toutefois, la jubilation avec laquelle le narrateur provoque dans le texte même ces collusions ne fait jamais oublier que les liens entre les pays ou les cultures traversés par le Danube sont aussi faits d'hostilité et de violence,<sup>16</sup> ce sur quoi nous reviendrons, et d'inégalités, comme le signalent les appellations parodiques de Danube Pauvre et de Danube Riche :

Pendant ce temps, j'avais bien avec le livre, j'arrivai à Budapest, c'est-à-dire que j'en avais terminé avec le Danube Riche, ce fut le tour du Danube Pauvre (p. 206).

Mais c'est en dépit, ou à cause, de ces douloureuses divisions que le narrateur, grâce à son statut de Voyageur danubien, se fait aussi le passeur – le plus souvent dans la transgression – de ces frontières.

## (2)b De l'Ouest à l'Est en passant par le « pays de l'informe »

Tout cet espace danubien hétérogène, comme nous venons de le dire, avant d'être caractérisé par des qualités objectives l'est par un certain nombre de représentations stéréotypées, de points de vue, avec lesquels se plaît à jouer notre auteur, c'est-à-dire que tout en reproduisant ces stéréotypes (qui disent toujours quelque chose de la réalité), il les ruine en même temps. Il est par exemple intéressant de comparer les cauchemars du narrateur à la veille de son départ pour la Roumanie, et son sentiment à son arrivée dans ce pays :

Je me vois assis dans la gare de Kolozsvár déserte, nocturne, j'entends le hurlement d'un chien au loin et je m'imagine de tristes haridelles traînant un chariot dans les ténèbres. Sous la paille un mort au visage bleu. Il y aura de l'obscurité, du silence et j'aurai froid. Et j'aurai peur (p. 231).

La gare nocturne de Kolozsvár est bondée. C'est à tel point contraire à mes fantasmes qu'elle leur est presque identique. C'est la même appréhension (p. 244).

Si les « fantasmes » contribuant à la formation et à la déformation du regard de l'étranger sont représentés dans ce texte, il met aussi en scène le jeu des points de vue, sur Vienne par exemple, selon qu'un Hongrois y arrive par l'Ouest ou par l'Est :

Les Hongrois débarquent à Vienne un peu dédaigneux. Ils n'ont aucun motif objectif pour cela, ni de *contre-motif* d'ailleurs (...) Il n'y a donc pas de motif, mais il y a bien un fondement qui est composé de rêves et d'illusions, rêves et illusions qu'ils se font de Budapest. (...) Ayant quitté mon chez-moi hongrois, j'arrivai dans une métropole occidentale, sur un lieu étranger et resplendissant (...) Alors que, venant de l'autre côté, Vienne me paraît un lieu familier (pp. 118–119).

En dehors de ces « fantasmes », ce qui fonde les représentations de l'espace danubien de Voyageur est une série d'oppositions recouvrant la division stéréotypée Est/Ouest. Ces oppositions se formulent le plus souvent en termes d'ordre et de désordre, de pauvreté et de richesse, etc. Sous le masque du grotesque et de l'exagération (puisqu'il s'agit de caricatures : souvenirs brillants de la Monarchie contre « remugle des Balkans », p. 154, par exemple) perce une certaine inquiétude pour « cet écroulement que nous appelons la Nouvelle Europe » (p. 161) et

qui commencerait là où « l'accompagnement musical du miracle économique s'éteint » (p. 153), c'est-à-dire après Vienne. A l'intérieur de cet espace traversé de divisions le pays de Voyageur, la Hongrie, apparaît finalement comme le pays de l'entre-deux. Pour inconfortable que soit cette position (comme l'histoire le montre), l'auteur préfère, une fois encore, manier le paradoxe et l'ironie, plutôt que sacrifier à la complaisance, quitte à stigmatiser son propre pays, comme ici : « comme je vous l'ai déjà dit, je venais du pays de l'informe » (p. 140). Il propose aussi, en marge du récit, cette parabole sur les tiques :

On distingue d'ailleurs une tique orientale et une tique occidentale [Ixodes ricinus], la chaîne des Alpes marquant la frontière. Les conséquences de la piqûre de l'acarien oriental sont en général plus graves. Les raisons scientifiques n'en sont pas encore élucidées. En Hongrie, bien que le pays se trouve à l'est des Alpes, on rencontre les deux espèces (p. 36).

Le narrateur se moque par ailleurs du terme d'« Europe centrale », définition « sous perfusion, branchée sur l'Union soviétique » (p. 209), et qui après 1989 apparaît comme un euphémisme pour désigner un bord extérieur, une marge de l'Europe (occidentale). Il préfère au terme de « Centre-Européen » celui de « *Mitoyen* » (p. 70). En effet, le terme d'Europe centrale peut avoir une acception normative permettant de se situer dans le cercle de la civilisation par opposition au domaine de la barbarie concernant toujours un voisin plus oriental, que relève le poète György Petri.<sup>17</sup> L'écrivain Endre Bojtár relève quant à lui une signification peut-être plus objective de ce terme. Selon lui « l'Europe centrale se caractérise essentiellement par le fait que, culturellement, nous avons toujours appartenu à l'Occident, tandis que notre vie quotidienne était celle de l'Est. Il en est résulté une grande tension entre l'esprit et la réalité. Cette tension se retrouve dans toute la littérature de l'Europe centrale et orientale ».

A travers les mises en scènes et confrontations de ces représentations stéréotypées, partiales ou problématiques, le territoire danubien apparaît comme traversé de contradictions et de conflits. Premièrement en effet, le parcours du narrateur montre que le Danube, sur son parcours autant géographique qu'historique, relie le meilleur et le pire, l'envers et l'endroit indissolublement attachés de ce territoire culturel. Le voyageur qui suit le cours du Danube ne peut ignorer ses souvenirs les plus sombres, comme ici :

Depuis Ulm ? je ne sais plus, oui, depuis Ulm, je ne cessai de m'approcher de Mauthausen, à mon corps défendant (p. 100).

Le texte fait plusieurs fois références à « l'autre Europe, la terrifiante Europe qu'il est impossible de détacher de celle-ci » (p. 158). En ce sens, l'opposition de l'ordre et du chaos sous-tend tout le texte. S'il reprend des représentations stéréo-

typées de rigueur germanique ou impériale et de l'entropie balkanique ou orientale, il évoque aussi l'inversion de ces catégories, dans le cas de violences politiques collectives et organisées. D'autre part, le thème de la dangereuse fascination pour le chaos, qui est fascination du néant est évoqué à travers la figure de « l'ingénieur Neweklowsky », qui « dans son expérience mentale *inverse* tout simplement le Danube » et que la légende présente « comme un véritable chercheur en chaos » (pp. 87–88). Un autre genre de violence sous-tendant les liens entre les différentes entités de cet espace danubien est évoqué, quand la diversité célébrée par la lettre et l'esprit de ce texte (jusque dans l'inquiétude qu'elle entraîne) fait place à l'hostilité, que l'effondrement des cadres politiques autoritaires ou totalitaires (dans l'empire austro-hongrois ou l'organisation de l'espace soviétique) libère des forces centrifuges. Elles s'exercent avec plus ou moins de violence, dans le pays du narrateur et à plus grande échelle dans la région. D'après M. Szegegy-Maszák, « la maladie et la mort de Danilo Kis<sup>18</sup> achèvent les démonstrations des déchirements centre-européens, maladie et mort qui dans le roman symbolisent la disparition de l'unité yougoslave ». <sup>19</sup>

Il est donc intéressant de constater cette tendance à la dispersion et au décentrement de l'écriture d'Esterházy, que nous avons pu par ailleurs qualifier de digressive. Ces traits stylistiques vont dans le sens des efforts du texte pour mettre en cause certains héritages historiques et culturels en ruinant leur solidification dans le langage, pour mieux connaître et s'appropriier ces héritages qui font l'identité pour le moins problématique de cette région. Le passage suivant désigne donc à la fois un « art poétique » et un parti-pris de perception des changements se produisant en Europe « centrale » à l'époque de ce voyage *en descendant le Danube* :

Je réalisai immédiatement les efforts de l'attitude postmoderne en faveur de la désintégration : le fait qu'elle ne reconnaît que des *systèmes* contingents, décentrés et divergents. (...) Tout me quittait, y compris ma langue – mot heureusement ambivalent en Pannonie. (...) Ainsi que je le dis plus haut, j'éliminai le moi, je dus me rendre à l'évidence que l'on devait s'y prendre d'une nouvelle façon pour assembler l'homme dans un texte : à partir des modes de discours, des proverbes, d'allusions incompréhensibles, d'infimes et indéfinissables nuances (...) tout reste ouvert : antisynthèse (pp. 162–164).

### (2)c Le problème de l'appartenance

Etant donné ce parti-pris stylistique, mais aussi la double marginalité de notre narrateur, comme voyageur d'une part, et comme écrivain d'autre part, on comprend bien que la représentation de l'appartenance à une nation ou à une culture

soit problématique (et problématisée) dans le texte d'Esterházy. A défaut, la définition suivante est sans doute la plus complète que le narrateur donne de lui :

Et quand je repense à toutes ces histoires, ce n'est pas moi que je revois, ni mon oncle éblouissant et ignoble, mais quelqu'un que je connais sans qu'il soit mon parent, quelqu'un qui n'est ni hongrois, ni serbe, ni tchèque, ni personne, plus exactement quelqu'un qui est tantôt ceci, tantôt cela, quelqu'un dont pas un atome ne m'appartient sauf le tout (p. 38).

Dans cet exercice du voyage où l'esprit s'applique à la relativité, à la comparaison, à la mise en relation, ce narrateur occupe une position d'extériorité, en particulier par rapport à sa propre nation, comme nous l'avons déjà observé. Il stigmatise son manque d'unité au moment de la crise du changement de régime, tout autant que les excès patriotiques qu'elle a toujours suscités.

Tout cela le conforta dans le sentiment que l'image qu'il avait de sa propre patrie, à savoir que le destin lui avait joué un tour particulièrement mauvais, est absolument faux, mensonger, ce n'est pas autre chose qu'une lamentation sur son propre sort. Les blessures d'amour propre et les plaintes comme caractéristiques nationales hongroises. Les Hongrois comme l'éternel perdant. On ressasse les sauvages Turcs, les Autrichiens chétifs, la paix honteuse de Trianon, les Anglais et, par-dessus le marché, les Russes ! Ô, ô ! c'est la guigne noire ! Alors que, à mon avis, cela correspond à un destin européen moyen. Par ici, quelques pays avaient parfois disparu ; à d'autres occasions, ils étaient poussés un peu plus loin, comme on déplace une armoire, et tôt ou tard les Russes débarquèrent, eux aussi, immanquablement. Inutile de nous lamenter sur notre sort (p. 253).

Il n'en apparaît pas moins, à travers cette attitude iconoclaste, que le sort de son pays et de ses habitants est un sujet de préoccupation permanente pour le narrateur. De la même façon qu'il exerce son sens critique à l'encontre des usages figés de la langue, l'écriture d'Esterházy suspecte dans son ensemble une langue qui s'est compromise comme instrument de mensonge, notamment dans la période socialiste. Et pourtant cette vaste entreprise critique ne saurait se dérouler autre part que dans la pratique de cette langue même, et qui plus est dans un travail littéraire de celle-ci.<sup>20</sup> On peut donc dire qu'avec sa langue comme avec les héritages historiques et culturels, Esterházy entretient un rapport qui est moins d'appartenance que de réappropriation critique, à une étape importante de l'histoire de son pays et de cette région danubienne dans lequel celui-ci s'insère et se singularise.

### 3. En remontant le Danube : problèmes de réception, de traduction, d'interprétation

#### (3)a « Contenu » centre-européen et « forme » européenne ?

Après avoir décrit dans ses grands traits le texte d'Esterházy, nous voudrions maintenant le considérer du point de vue de sa réception – dans son propre pays et en Europe occidentale. Nous nous demanderons pour commencer sur quelle dimension et quels enjeux du texte la réception met l'accent. On remarque d'abord que les critiques, dans des revues littéraires hongroises, consacrent une part importante de leurs analyses à un enjeu thématique du texte, dont nous avons aussi parlé, qui concerne l'histoire du pays, l'identité nationale et sa mise en question. À l'étranger, cette dimension du texte est justement ce qui rend difficile la réception et la traduction de *L'Éillade de la comtesse Hahn-Hahn* et des autres textes d'Esterházy, puisque nous avons vu que mises en question de l'identité et interrogation de l'histoire nationales ont pour théâtre et pour objet la langue (hongroise) elle-même, dans ses réalisations littéraires et dans ses aspects les plus quotidiens. En même temps, cette thématique est loin d'être spécifiquement hongroise, si l'on considère la littérature contemporaine européenne qui se fait l'écho, dans différentes langues et différentes cultures, de la disparition ou des changements de la définition du collectif, de la fin des idéologies ou des illusions politiques. Au-delà de cette première question, c'est l'enjeu proprement littéraire du texte qui intéresse la critique hongroise de *L'Éillade*. L'écriture dans laquelle se déroulent les mises en questions évoquées plus haut est en effet caractérisée par la digression et le décentrement, les formes accumulatives et l'hétérogénéité, les décalages, l'usage et le détournement de citations, de fragments de textes mais aussi de mythes et d'images. Par ces traits ici très rapidement rassemblés, on peut au contraire affirmer que le texte d'Esterházy rejoint une conception actuelle de la définition postmoderne de la littérature, ce qui cette fois faciliterait plutôt son insertion dans la littérature européenne sans restriction régionale, et donc sa réception à l'étranger. Son texte offre d'ailleurs une intertextualité européenne qui le rattache à la littérature occidentale. On remarque notamment la présence intéressante de quatre auteurs contemporains dont deux sont occidentaux, plus précisément italiens (Italo Calvino et Claudio Magris) et deux sont des voisins d'Europe centrale, le serbe Danilo Kiš et le tchèque Milan Kundera. Pourtant, l'appréciation qui accompagne l'évocation de ces auteurs n'obéit pas à ces distinctions nationales ou régionales. En effet, les références à Kundera et à Claudio Magris<sup>21</sup> ne sont pas dénuées de quelques sarcasmes, ou du moins d'ironie, alors que les références à Danilo Kiš et à Italo Calvino sont de véritables hommages littéraires, notamment pour Calvino qui n'est pas nommé mais à qui Esterházy emprunte la forme des *Villes invisibles* pour tout un chapitre de son propre livre.



Ce qui rattache donc Esterházy à une littérature européenne au sens le plus large et ce qui le rend plus visible et surtout plus lisible à l'extérieur de son pays et de sa région n'est donc pas ce qui pourrait faire de son texte un document ou un essai sur l'histoire de la Hongrie, le sentiment national, etc., dans ce pays. Ce qui rend possible la réception de son texte à l'étranger est bien plutôt ce par quoi il est une expérience et une recherche dans l'ordre des formes littéraires, expérience et recherche qui rejoignent les interrogations esthétiques de cette fin du XX<sup>e</sup> siècle. On le constate en observant ne serait-ce que l'« extérieur » de la traduction française de *L'Éillade de la comtesse Hahn-Hahn*. Ce texte est publié par Gallimard, tout comme précédemment cinq autres de ses romans,<sup>22</sup> ce qui peut apparaître comme une forme de reconnaissance d'une certaine valeur littéraire, ou du moins comme un accueil favorable dans le paysage éditorial, et avantageux auprès du public français. La collection dans laquelle le livre prend place est la collection « Arcades » et ce choix éditorial est déjà significatif de la façon dont il est reçu, soulignant d'emblée, bien qu'implicitement, le caractère problématique et donc intéressant de la définition générique du texte. En effet, à la lecture de la liste des ouvrages parus « dans la même collection » on s'aperçoit qu'un grand nombre d'entre eux porte, inscrit dans les titres mêmes, cette problématique du genre qui traverse aussi le texte d'Esterházy. On y relève ainsi les termes de carnets, lettres, exercices, entretiens, essais, conversations, correspondance, portraits, anthologie, notes, géographie, livre de bord, nouvelles et chroniques, etc., dont on trouve des fragments dans le texte d'Esterházy.

D'autre part le texte de présentation en quatrième de couverture attire plutôt l'attention sur les enjeux littéraires du texte – ne négligeant tout de même pas de mentionner que « cette exploration de l'espace et du temps (...) permet à Péter Esterházy de présenter en raccourci l'histoire de sa famille et celle de l'Europe centrale » – en insistant notamment sur la représentation, dans le texte même, du rapport entre l'écrivain et le lecteur, à travers le couple « Voyageur-à-gages » – « Commanditaire ». La présentation sommaire du texte rattache donc celui-ci à des problématiques rencontrées dans d'autres littératures occidentales contemporaines (romanesques ou théoriques), dont le lecteur français est familier, en ces termes par exemple : « Et de s'interroger sur la situation de l'écrivain dont le public attend des récits de préférence distrayants, qui le transportent dans un ailleurs. Le romancier serait donc aux ordres d'un tyran : le Lecteur. Dans quelles limites doit-il se plier à ses exigences ? Doit-il céder à la coquetterie ? », etc. Toutefois, l'évocation de ce « lector in fabula » pourrait tout aussi bien nous reconduire, après les analyses du texte que nous avons proposées, à une dimension imagologique de la question de la réception de l'œuvre, et nous amener à nous poser la question suivante : ce lecteur inscrit dans le texte est-il un lecteur hongrois ou le texte joue-t-il aussi avec les attentes d'un lecteur ouest-européen face à un texte centre-européen ? Il faudrait, dans la réponse à donner à cette question faire la part

de l'intention de l'auteur et du travail ultérieur du texte confronté à la traduction, à des lecteurs étrangers, etc...

La distinction posée entre un enjeu proprement littéraire et formel qui rattacherait le texte d'Esterházy aux courants de la littérature européenne (occidentale) et un contenu qui ne s'adresserait qu'à un public national (hongrois) ou régional (centre-européen) est de toutes façons provisoire. Il est vrai qu'Esterházy est peu lu en France, beaucoup moins par exemple qu'en Allemagne, à cause peut-être d'une proximité géographique et historique plus grande. Mais on pourrait dire aussi que de la même façon qu'il est, à l'étranger, réputé difficile à traduire, Esterházy est dans son propre pays réputé difficile à lire. A travers sa tension entre l'expression d'une spécificité nationale, à la fois revendiquée et dénigrée, et son appartenance « naturelle » à la modernité ou à la postmodernité littéraire européenne, ce texte montre donc comment les questions de l'interprétation et de la traduction (non seulement d'une langue et d'une culture à une autre, mais aussi d'une culture à son expression littéraire) sont indissociables. Pour aborder cette question nous nous référerons à l'article de M. Szegedy-Maszák intitulé « Tradition et (ré)interprétation, Esterházy en hongrois et en langues étrangères ». <sup>23</sup>

### (3)b L'expression du spécifique est-elle traduisible ?

Ce qui rend difficile à traduire le texte d'Esterházy n'est-il pas, en effet, moins que le caractère spécifique(ment hongrois) de son *contenu* – idée qui repose sur une distinction artificielle entre forme et contenu – plutôt le lien intime, et ici particulièrement serré, entre cette œuvre et la *langue* dans laquelle elle est créée, lien sur lequel repose la littérarité de tout texte littéraire, et grâce auquel l'attention se déplace de l'étude des intentions de l'auteur à celle du fonctionnement du texte, de l'œuvre comme contenant d'un message à l'œuvre comme objet de langage ne « disant » pas autre chose qu'elle même. L'article de M. Szegedy-Maszák que nous venons de mentionner a pour point de départ l'affirmation suivante : l'œuvre d'Esterházy illustre et revendique le fait que la langue est une mémoire collective, ce par quoi elle est dans son œuvre le terrain même de la recherche de l'identité personnelle, nationale et familiale. <sup>24</sup> Mais est-ce à dire pour autant que la littérature en langue nationale n'intéresserait que la collectivité parlant cette langue ?

Cette question est-elle une spécificité de la littérature hongroise, et éventuellement de toutes les langues de faible diffusion, qui ne peuvent prétendre à un rayonnement universel, sauf par le biais de la traduction, toujours problématique ? A ce sujet, M. Szegedy-Maszák fait référence à des déclarations de deux grands auteurs hongrois exprimant à l'égard de la traduction un détachement peut-être non dénué de provocation. Le premier qu'il cite est Kosztolányi, déclarant qu'il n'y aurait aucun intérêt à se préoccuper du jugement des œuvres hongroises à

l'étranger.<sup>25</sup> Plus loin c'est Esterházy lui-même qu'il cite, se disant n'être pas loin de penser qu'il « vaudrait mieux ne rien traduire du tout ». <sup>26</sup> D'après M. Szegedy-Maszák, cette double spécificité de la littérature hongroise qui fait qu'en plus de sa dépendance à l'égard des traductions quant à son rayonnement universel, ses plus grands auteurs émettent des réserves à l'égard de celle-ci, vient du fait que « ce qu'il y a de meilleur dans notre prose narrative est très étroitement lié à notre histoire nationale ». <sup>27</sup> L'œuvre d'Esterházy, comme nous nous sommes efforcés de le montrer dans notre développement, est la meilleure illustration de ce fait. M. Szegedy-Maszák donne en exemple les cas limites, apparaissant dans certains textes d'Esterházy, d'expressions idiomatiques courantes où la langue fixe et incorpore en effet la mémoire historique de certains événements, rendant ces expressions intraduisibles, illisibles en dehors d'un contexte hongrois. Par exemple l'expression « több is veszett Mohácsnál » <sup>28</sup> veut dire « il y a plus grave », par rapport à tel ou tel problème, en faisant référence à la défaite des Hongrois face aux Ottomans à Mohács en 1526 (littéralement : « on a perdu plus lors de la bataille de Mohács »). Cette expression ne peut pas être rendue dans une traduction française, sauf à transposer tout le système de référence et à inventer une expression que la langue française n'a pas forgé, du style « on a perdu plus en Alsace et en Lorraine », mais outre l'artificialité d'une telle solution, elle n'offre aucune correspondance historique. La meilleure solution serait alors de traduire littéralement l'expression idiomatique hongroise et de lui adjoindre une note explicative, ce qui d'un point de vue littéraire n'est pas des plus satisfaisants. On rencontre dans la traduction française de *L'Œillade de la comtesse Hahn-Hahn* un certain nombre de problèmes de cet ordre, comme par exemple la quasi lexicalisation de la date de 1956, dont la mention n'est accompagnée d'aucune note explicative. <sup>29</sup> Il est vrai qu'il s'agit là de l'histoire récente et que la « révolution hongroise » est un événement connu en France à cause des échos qu'ont donné à cet événement des intellectuels français. Un autre exemple de ce type de problèmes concerne le nom de villes qui se trouvent actuellement en Roumanie et sont officiellement et internationalement connues sous leurs noms roumains, mais qu'Esterházy désigne uniquement par leurs nom hongrois, ce qui est en soi significatif. La traduction a retenu comme solution de mentionner le nom hongrois suivi du nom roumain entre parenthèses, ce qui constitue de toute façon une perte de sens, d'une part parce qu'aucune note explicative n'apprend au lecteur non averti pourquoi ces villes peuvent être désignées par deux noms, hongrois et roumain, et d'autre part parce que le lecteur français ne sait pas que l'auteur fait le choix, naturel pour un hongrois, de n'appeler ces villes que par leur nom hongrois. <sup>30</sup>

Tous ces exemples montrent donc que la conception de la langue comme étant en elle-même un système de références culturelles et historiques rend très problématique la traduction – et plus largement l'interprétation – de certains passages qui peuvent sembler anecdotiques mais ne le sont pas si l'on considère l'ensemble

du texte. M. Szegedy-Maszák avance l'idée qu'il existerait « différents degrés de traductibilité », <sup>31</sup> ce qui pourrait impliquer, bien qu'il ne le dise pas, l'existence plus problématique de différents degrés d'universalité. Il cite par exemple Imre Kertész, qui avec le prix Nobel de littérature bénéficie d'une reconnaissance internationale, <sup>32</sup> et dont l'œuvre serait plus facile à traduire que celle d'Esterházy. Bien qu'il affirme que la raison de ce fait n'est pas stylistique, M. Szegedy-Maszák parle de certains textes qui opposent « moins de résistance à la traduction », <sup>33</sup> ce qui en négatif pourrait désigner la résistance qu'opposent les textes d'Esterházy, effectivement traversés de jeux intertextuels et de citations cachées de la littérature hongroise, <sup>34</sup> de représentations de langages spécifiques à une époque ou un groupe social. <sup>35</sup> La principale raison pour laquelle Kertész serait plus traduisible qu'Esterházy est que l'expérience qui est au centre de ses textes, c'est-à-dire la déportation, les camps, l'extermination, est une référence commune à tout le monde, au moins européen, depuis la Seconde guerre mondiale et même plus largement, au XX<sup>e</sup> siècle. Au contraire, l'histoire et les problèmes d'identité hongrois sont peu connus, même quand ils sont liés aux épisodes de l'histoire européenne qui occupent l'œuvre de Kertész, comme nous l'avons évoqué à la lecture de *L'Écluse de la comtesse Hahn-Hahn*, où c'est bien par rapport à tout l'espace culturel et géographique parcouru par le Danube, de la Forêt Noire à la mer Noire que l'auteur considère son « petit pays ».

Nous pensons toutefois que la valeur des textes de Kertész tient moins à l'expérience qui en est le centre qu'à une écriture originale, une voix encore inouïe pour dire ces expériences. Par ailleurs, et pour en revenir au texte d'Esterházy, le fait qu'il ne soit pas en prise directe avec ce que Jaspers appelle les « expériences-limites » <sup>36</sup> et qui constituent selon lui le seul « thème » possible de toute œuvre littéraire, ne le condamne pas à l'inessentialité et ne le prive pas non plus de l'accès à l'universel. En effet, comme nous l'avons vu, si l'écriture d'Esterházy joue avec les frontières de l'intraductibilité, son livre n'en est pas moins traduisible et effectivement traduit en plusieurs langues. Justement, traduire cette œuvre et lire ensemble, en les comparant, l'original et ses traductions nous oblige à réfléchir à cette « situation-limite », à ce problème universel mais qui traverse singulièrement la littérature hongroise de tous les temps, qu'est celui de l'identité écartelée (et menacée ?) entre le singulier et l'universel, entre le désir d'affirmer une singularité et la nécessité de la faire connaître, de la communiquer, situation qu'on retrouve dans le champ littéraire sous la forme de ce paradoxe qui fait que l'intimité indestructible d'une œuvre et de la langue (de la culture, etc...) dans laquelle elle a été créée doit nécessairement être ouverte (par la traduction dans d'autres langues) pour la survie même de cette œuvre, puisque c'est bien dans les traductions que « la vie de l'original connaît son développement le plus tardif et le plus étendu », ainsi que l'écrit Walter Benjamin dans « La tâche du traducteur ». <sup>37</sup> Dans cet article, dont la lecture pourrait enrichir singulièrement notre réflexion

sur la vie de l'œuvre de l'écrivain hongrois Péter Esterházy, Benjamin écrit que « toute traduction est une manière pour ainsi dire provisoire de se mesurer à ce qui rend les langues étrangères l'une à l'autre ».<sup>38</sup> Cette chose qui « rend les langues étrangères l'une à l'autre » occupe effectivement une place de première importance dans le texte d'Esterházy, si l'on considère que ce qu'on désigne sous ce terme est l'historicité des langues, l'influence sur elles d'un contexte historico-politique, d'une histoire touchant la communauté qui parle cette langue. Le texte d'Esterházy est donc pour cette raison à la fois difficile à traduire et à traduire nécessairement, car cette détermination de la langue par l'histoire de la communauté qui la parle – dimension que l'écriture de Péter Esterházy recherche, montre, met à distance, etc. – est aussi à la fois ce qui rend les langues étrangères l'une à l'autre et ce qu'elles partagent toutes sans exception. La lecture d'Esterházy en hongrois ou en langues étrangères, en hongrois *et* en langues étrangères nous permet donc d'avancer un peu dans la voie de la réflexion sur « la langue de l'étranger », pour reprendre le titre du discours de réception du prix Adorno prononcé par Jacques Derrida à Francfort en septembre 2001,<sup>39</sup> dans lequel il se demande « comment cultiver la poéticité de l'idiome en général (...) sans donner ses vieilles armes rouillées à la réactivité identitaire et à toute la vieille idéologie souverainiste, communautariste, différentialiste (...) sans le “narcissisme collectif” d'une “métaphysique de la langue” ». Il nous semble justement pouvoir lire dans l'œuvre d'Esterházy l'illustration même de cette tension entre une culture de la poéticité de l'idiome et une entreprise de « déconstruction » de tous les fantasmes identitaires qui s'ancrent dans une langue nationale.

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Ainsi, dans les problèmes posés par sa réception, comme dans sa conception même, le texte d'Esterházy montre cette tension – réfléchie et mise à distance dans son œuvre et présente, d'après celle-ci, d'une façon ou d'une autre dans toute la littérature hongroise – entre définition nationale ou régionale d'une part, et définition européenne d'autre part, de son identité. On aura pu se rendre compte que, dans ce contexte, la notion d'« européenité » tendrait à être confondue avec celle d'universalité, par opposition à la restriction régionale que contient le terme d'Europe centrale, la « centre-européanité » impliquant un certain nombre de déterminations culturelles et politiques, de thématiques et de problèmes identitaires, etc. Il s'agit là d'un problème de réception et d'imagologie, évoqué par exemple par Danilo Kiš dans son livre intitulé *Homo poéticus*,<sup>40</sup> par opposition à l'*homo politicus* que le public « européen » condamnerait à être l'écrivain centre-européen, représentant de « ces littératures [qui] sont très solidement ancrées dans l'histoire et les sociétés de chaque pays, (...) de chacun de ces peuples dont

l'existence fut mise en danger, à plusieurs reprises, par l'histoire [et où] la notion de conscience nationale est très fortement liée à celle de sauvegarde de l'identité ».<sup>41</sup> Cette définition proposée par Lajos Nyéki n'est sans doute plus d'actualité (notamment en ce qui concerne la notion de « sauvegarde de l'identité »), mais il reste vrai que c'est de cette façon que le public des pays d'Europe occidentale a connu la Hongrie et formé ses attentes à l'égard des productions culturelles et littéraires venant de ce pays, et ce jusqu'à la fin du XX<sup>e</sup> siècle (deuxième guerre mondiale, émigrants et dissidents du bloc soviétique, révolution de 1956, changement de régime, etc.). Les « réalités centre-européennes » seraient donc les avatars locaux et contingents de « l'idée européenne », ce qui aurait pour effet de produire dans la littérature une définition étroite de ces œuvres, ou du moins des attentes face à celles-ci, et en même temps de rendre ces mêmes œuvres difficilement compréhensibles ou intéressantes pour les lecteurs étrangers au détail et au contenu des péripéties locales (« centre européennes ») de l'idée ou de l'identité européenne. Comme on l'aura compris, nous pensons que c'est en grande partie aux traducteurs et aux critiques d'œuvrer au dépassement de cette méconnaissance, qui s'explique en grande partie par la division historique du continent qui n'a effectivement pris fin qu'il y a quelques années.

Quoi qu'il en soit, un pays comme la Hongrie occupe, par sa position géographique et linguistique, et donc aussi culturelle, une place à la fois « centrale » et marginale. Les représentations – en particulier les représentations littéraires – du pays et de son identité sont donc marquées par une tension, telle par exemple que celle décrite par Endre Bojtár citée précédemment, et selon lequel du fait que l'Europe centrale ait « toujours appartenu à l'Occident », tandis que la « vie quotidienne était celle de l'Est » a produit, notamment dans la littérature, « une grande tension entre l'esprit et la réalité ». L'écriture d'Esterházy à la fois démystificatrice et affabulatrice pourrait être définie en ces termes, par cette tension. Et dans l'exploration de cette situation inconfortable, à la fois centrale et marginale, l'écriture joue de ce vertige :

A ce moment là – quand on arriva à Orth ? – l'Europe était en train de changer (...). On pouvait penser aussi bien telle chose que le contraire. (...) A cet endroit, l'Europe était creuse, telle une balle dégonflée. Le monde avait vécu dans une quiétude mensongère. (...) Cette contrée rappelait des œuvres de génie : elle voulait implanter l'incertitude et l'inquiétude dans le monde (pp. 159–160).

Esterházy joue aussi, peut-être pour se sauver de ce vertige, du paradoxe et de la contradiction, avec les armes de l'ironie, d'abord tournée contre soi, comme écrivain et comme écrivain hongrois, contre la tradition martyrologique des représentations de l'identité nationale,<sup>42</sup> contre des « valeurs collectives » nationales stéréotypées et pourtant parfois démenties par l'histoire (l'amour de la liberté, la

fierté, l'intégrité, la fidélité à la patrie, etc.). Mais au-delà de son pays, c'est l'Europe comme modèle universel qui est prise dans cette entreprise de démystification. C'est dans *L'Œillade de la comtesse Hahn-Hahn* le thème que nous avons déjà évoqué de « l'autre Europe », de l'envers absolu des notions mêmes de culture et de civilisation, c'est-à-dire les violences collectives et plus particulièrement celles du XX<sup>e</sup> siècle, avec le nazisme, le génocide des Juifs, « La Gironde », symbole de l'impérialisme français transformé en prison dans le delta du Danube où sont déportés des Hongrois de Roumanie, le traité de Trianon, etc. On voit donc que de quel côté qu'on le regarde, les frontières du territoire culturel et spirituel de l'Europe sont mouvantes et relatives, et il semblerait dès lors bien difficile d'en donner une définition exclusive ou inclusive si, comme l'écrit Esterházy,<sup>44</sup> « l'Europe c'est ce qui est. C'est ce qu'il y a ici. On ne peut pas enlever l'Europe et on ne peut pas la rendre. Et si elle a tout de même été enlevée, ce qui est resté à sa place était encore l'Europe, et l'est toujours. » En Europe centrale comme en Europe occidentale « l'idée européenne » serait bien avant tout celle de la réflexion critique sur soi, son histoire et son identité. En ce sens l'œuvre littéraire d'Esterházy et singulièrement le texte dont il a ici été question en relèvent parfaitement et l'illustrent. Nous finirons donc avec ces mots de l'auteur qui parle ici de l'Europe en général, mais dans un langage qui fait écho à celui qui nous a accompagné à travers un certain territoire européen, « en descendant le Danube » :

L'Européen vit avec un miroir. Est-ce le territoire de la vanité ? Ce serait plutôt celui de la connaissance de soi, le territoire intranquille de la connaissance de soi. (...) [Aujourd'hui] nos miroirs se taisent. Nous avons été effrayés, non sans raison, de nos visions. (...) A quoi ressemble(ra) le nouvel Européen ? (...) A cette question la vraie réponse européenne est : je ne sais pas. Si tout va bien.<sup>45</sup>

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> *Harmonia Caelestis*, Budapest, Magvető Könyvkiadó, 2001 ; *Javított kiadás*, Budapest, Magvető Könyvkiadó, 2002.
- <sup>2</sup> *Kis magyar pornográfia*, Budapest, Magvető Könyvkiadó, 1984.
- <sup>3</sup> *Termelési regény*, Budapest, Magvető Könyvkiadó, 1979 ; *Bevezetés a szépirodalomba*, Budapest, Magvető Könyvkiadó, 1984.
- <sup>4</sup> *Hahn-Hahn grófnő pillantása, lefelé a Dunán*, Budapest, Magvető Könyvkiadó, 1990.
- <sup>5</sup> *L'Œillade de la comtesse Hahn-Hahn, en descendant le Danube*, traduit du hongrois par Agnès Járffás, Paris, Éditions Gallimard, collections « Arcades », 1999.
- <sup>6</sup> Cf. Philippe Lejeune, *Le pacte autobiographique*, Paris, Éditions du Seuil, 1975.
- <sup>7</sup> Comme par exemple à la page 40 : « J'écris ces lignes à Noël ; et le Noël de 1989, en Europe centrale n'est pas la fête de la charité ».

- <sup>8</sup> Tout lecteur familier de l'histoire hongroise ou de l'œuvre de Péter Esterházy sait quel rôle y joue la famille dont il est issu et dont il porte le nom.
- <sup>9</sup> « Nelly ou le bras mort », p. 10.
- <sup>10</sup> On a donc affaire, dans une large mesure, à un texte « polyphonique », selon la définition de Bakhtine (*Poétique de Dostoïevski*), d'autant plus que dans cette composition entrent les multiples « voix » d'un discours social traversé de contradictions et en conflit avec une réalité en pleine transformation.
- <sup>11</sup> Les passages imprévisibles de la première à la troisième personne renforcent le sentiment que le voyage rend le voyageur « étranger à lui-même ». C'est par exemple le cas au chapitre 19, quand Voyageur arrive à Budapest. Un narrateur extérieur (focalisation zéro) prend le relais pour décrire l'étrangeté et l'incompréhensibilité de la langue hongroise.
- <sup>12</sup> En empruntant encore ce terme à Bakhtine, in *L'Œuvre de François Rabelais et la culture populaire au Moyen-Âge et sous la Renaissance* cette fois.
- <sup>13</sup> Les vers de l'*Exhortation* de Vörösmarty qu'on retrouve, déformés, dans le passage cité du texte d'Esterházy sont les suivants : « Reste fidèle à ta patrie/Hongrois, c'est ton berceau./ De sa chair elle t'a nourri/Et sera ton tombeau. » Au sujet de l'*Exhortation* et de l'*Hymne* et de leur place dans la culture hongroise jusqu'à nos jours, voir les travaux d'Anne-Marie Losonczy, notamment l'article intitulé « Dire, chanter et faire ; la construction de la « patrie » par l'hymne national hongrois et l'*Exhortation* », paru dans *Terrain*, septembre 1997, pp. 97–112.
- <sup>14</sup> Comme le montre aussi ce passage : « *C'est en vain, ô Commanditaire (Bailleur) magnanime, que je m'efforcerais de te décrire la ville de Budapest [...], en vain car cette ville est muette, taciturne, elle a perdu l'usage de la parole. Une description de la ville de Budapest telle qu'elle est aujourd'hui devrait comprendre tout le passé de Budapest. Mais la ville ne raconte pas son passé, elle le possède pareil aux lignes d'une main, inscrit au coin des rues, dans les grilles des fenêtres, sur les rampes des escaliers, les paratonnerres, les hampes des drapeaux, sur tout segment marqué à son tour de griffes, dentelures, entailles, virgules* » (pp. 168–169).
- <sup>15</sup> Italo Calvino, *Le città invisibili*, Giulio Einaudi Editore, Turin, 1972; Éditions du Seuil, Paris, 1974 pour la traduction française par Jean Thibaudeau.
- <sup>16</sup> Dans le chapitre 19 « Les villes invisibles », la ville de Budapest est décrite comme celle « où convergent à chaque solstice et à chaque équinoxe la haine de sept nations », p. 174.
- <sup>17</sup> « Un Hongrois pourra dire "les Roumains et les Yougoslaves sont balkaniques, nous sommes d'Europe centrale". Les Tchèques diront : "Nous étions des démocrates entre les deux guerres alors que les Hongrois avaient un régime fasciste et une société féodale". Et les Polonais : "Nous avons déjà une Constitution au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle". Et nous dirons tous en chœur : "Nous n'avons jamais été staliniens". Pourtant Dostoïevski et Pouchkine étaient aussi des Européens. », extrait d'entretiens parus dans *Autrement*, série Monde, « Europe centrale, un continent imaginaire », hors série n° 51, février 1991, comme la citation suivante d'Endre Bojtár.
- <sup>18</sup> Danilo Kiš est cet écrivain né d'une mère monténégrine et d'un père hongrois et juif, parlant couramment le hongrois, écrivant en serbe, qui est mort à Paris au début des années 1990. Les passages concernés se trouvent aux pages 255–258 : « Voyageur-à-gages aimait beaucoup le propriétaire de la voix, dont plusieurs affirmaient qu'il était serbe, alors que sa mère était monténégrine, son père juif hongrois, et lui-même, probablement, le seul vrai Yougoslave, c'est en lui que parvint à son paroxysme cette idée insensée qu'est la Yougoslavie, il en fut la preuve existentielle, la preuve que des peuples étaient non seulement capables de s'entretuer mais aussi de s'enrichir les uns les autres ».
- <sup>19</sup> Szegegy-Maszák, Mihály, « Sok, de nem minden », *Jelenkor* (Budapest), mars 1992, pp. 277–280.
- <sup>20</sup> L'auteur déclare ainsi « ce n'est pas à mon pays, ni à ma patrie, ni à ma classe, si j'en ai une, ni à ma famille, et j'en ai une, que je dois fidélité, mais à la langue et à elle seule, à la langue hon-



groise », dans Péter Esterházy, *A szavak csodálatos életéből* (Le fabuleux destin des mots), Budapest, Magvető Könyvkiadó, 2003, p. 11.

21 La référence à Claudio Magris n'est toutefois pas seulement épisodique et carnavalesque. D'une certaine façon le texte d'Esterházy dès son titre se place dans une intertextualité avec le *Danube* de Magris (*Danubio*, Garzanti, 1986 et Gallimard 1988 pour la traduction française par Jean et Marie-Noëlle Pastureau.

22 *Trois anges me surveillent* en 1989 (*Termelési regény*), *Les verbes auxiliaires du cœur* en 1992 (*A szív segédigéi*), *Le livre de Hrabal* en 1994 (*Hrabal könyve*), *Une femme* en 1998 (*Egy nő*), *Harmonia Caelestis* en 2002.

23 Szegedy-Maszák, Mihály, « Hagyomány és újraértelmezés, Esterházy magyarul és idegen nyelven », in : Józán Ildikó, Kulcsár Szabó Ernő, Szegedy-Maszák Mihály szerk., *Az elbeszélés módzatai, Narrativa és identitás* (Les modalités du récit, Narration et identité), Budapest, Osiris Kiadó, 2003, pp. 532–544.

24 Szegedy-Maszák, Mihály, *art. cit.*, p. 532, « milyen sokat köszönhet művészete annak a fölismerésnek, hogy a nyelv közös emlékezet, amely a személyes, családi s nemzeti azonosság keresésének és (újra) megtalálásának a záloga lehet ».

25 *Ibid.*, p. 533, « Kosztolányi azt állította, a magyar művek külföldi megítélésével nem érdemes törődni. “Nem is az a fontos, ami ott künn történik velük. Az a fontos, ami itthon történik” ».

26 *Ibid.*, p. 543, « a fordítás homályos vidék, de tőlem nem áll távol az a radikális gondolat, hogy nem, nem kéne fordítani semmit ».

27 *Ibid.*, p. 536, « elbeszélő prózánk java rendkívül szorosan kapcsolódik nemzeti történelmünkhöz »

28 *Ibid.*, cité p. 533.

29 Par exemple : « Ils firent ensuite un tour-d'honneur-au-calvados chez Bandi Kasza, qui avait fait de la taule après 1956 pour passage illégal de la frontière », p. 219.

30 Il s'agit de Temesvár (Timișoara), p. 40 et de Kolozsvár (Cluj), p. 227. Dans les occurrences suivantes seul le nom hongrois est mentionné.

31 Szegedy-Maszák, Mihály, *art. cit.*, p. 533, « a fordíthatóságnak különböző mértékei lehetnek ».

32 Il est d'ailleurs intéressant de constater qu'il était, avant ce prix, plus connu à l'étranger que dans son propre pays.

33 Szegedy-Maszák, *art. cit.*, p. 534, « kisebb ellenállást tanusít ».

34 Citations cachées, c'est-à-dire non signalées comme telles de Vörösmarty, extraite de l'*Exhortation* dans le passage déjà cité p. 6 et de Ady, le vers suivant du *Chant des Jacobins hongrois*, p. 77 : « Danube et Olt parlent d'une commune voix ».

35 Par exemple « comme disaient les journalistes, “la liberté éclata” » (p. 204). Il ne s'agit là que d'un exemple ponctuel, alors que le texte *dans son ensemble* joue à mettre en rapport ou en tension des expressions figées, ou des mots, ou des usages de la langue.

36 Karl Jaspers, *Introduction à la philosophie*, éditions 10/18, p. 20 à 25.

37 Walter Benjamin, *Œuvres I*, « La tâche du traducteur » [1923], Gallimard collection Folio Essais, 2000, pp. 247–248 dans l'édition que nous utilisons.

38 *Op. cit.*, pp. 251–252, nous ne parlerons pas ici de l'au-delà de ce « provisoire » qui est par ailleurs l'essentiel de cet écrit de Benjamin.

39 Extraits publiés dans *Le Monde diplomatique* de janvier 2002, n° 574.

40 Danilo Kiš, *Homo poeticus*, Paris, Fayard, 1993, traduit du serbo-croate par Pascale Delpech.

41 Lajos Nyéki, *Des Sabataires à Barbe-Bleue*, Paris, INALCO-Publications Langues O.

42 Cf. citations des pages 306–307.

<sup>43</sup> « Cette loi fut exploitée à l'occasion des maudits traités français qui avaient clos la Première Guerre mondiale pour établir les frontières ; alors en guise de plaisanterie (oh ! l'esprit français !), ils parlèrent de barbelés, quant à Vyx, une fois il employa même l'expression « rideau de fer » en français dans le texte, remportant un franc succès et ignorant qu'il parlait de l'avenir. Seul le comte Apponyi se taisait, en quatre langues, sans aucun accent. », p. 240.

<sup>44</sup> *Ha minden jól megy, Antológia*, Budapest, Balassi Kiadó–Soros Alapítvány, 1994.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 84–85.

# HUNGARIAN ART AND MUSIC IN CANADA

JOHN MISKA

Szigeti Magyarság, Victoria, B.C.  
Canada

Hungarian-Canadian artists and musicians have shown distinguished accomplishments in the various disciplines. In the arts they have been honoured amongst the nation's very best in painting, sculpting, engraving, printmaking, etching, as well as in industrial graphics, photography, drawing and, above all, coin design. My bibliography, *Canadian Studies on Hungarians* (2<sup>nd</sup> vol., 1995) includes 87 citations and biographical summaries pertaining to 23 artists practicing in Canada on a professional basis. The reference book entitled *Professional Hungarian Artists Outside Hungary*, by Ernő Gyimesy Kásás and László Könnyű (1977), introduces information on 48 Hungarian-Canadian artists. My own selection was based on the availability of literature on each individual artist published in the English and French languages, including the monumental *Arts in Canada: A Union List of Artists' Files / Artists au Canada...* (1988), the two-volume *Art and Architecture in Canada* (1991), and the seven-volume *A Dictionary of Canadian Artists*.

**Keywords:** art, music, artists, musicians, Hungarian-Canadian painters, sculptors, printmakers, composers, performers and educators

## 1. Art

One of the most successful artists included are Endre Böszin, Miklós Hornyák, Ladislav Kardos, Gyula Marosán, Imre Mosdossy, Elek Imrédy, Dora Pédery de Hunt and others. *Endre Böszin* (1923), a Pilis-born painter and sculptor, studied at the Academy of Fine Arts in Budapest. After the 1956 Revolution he moved to Scotland, then to London, and in 1966 to Canada. His works are represented in the National Hungarian Art Gallery, and several art galleries in Canada and the United States. Another distinguished artist, a painter, engraver, printmaker and etcher, is *Miklós Hornyák* (1896–1965). Born in Budapest, Hornyák studied portrait and painting at the Academy of Fine Arts, and did postgraduate work in Vienna, Munich, Antwerp and Paris. He came to Canada in 1929 and settled in Toronto. He began to exhibit with the Royal Canadian Academy and the Ontario Society of Artists. Some of his etchings had been used by industrial firms for their

Christmas cards. His prints were exhibited at the California Printmakers, the Philadelphia Society of Etchers, the Seattle Northwest Printmakers, etc. He taught printmaking at the Ontario College of Art. Awards received are The Associate of the Royal Canadian Academy of Art, Fifty Prints of the Year (1932, 1933), The Reid Silver Memorial Award, the E. A. Klein First Purchase Award, etc. He is represented in the National Gallery of Canada, Royal Ontario Museum and the University of Toronto Hart House.

The painter *Ladislav Kardos* was born in 1909 in Budapest. He came to Vancouver in 1951. His paintings include scenes of streets, docks, harbours and villages. Exhibited his paintings in Vancouver, Paris, New York, Melbourne, Budapest, Montreal and Lima. Kardos is represented in the Museum of Art, Paris, Museum of Contemporary Art, Montreal, at the University of British Columbia, and the Confederation of Art Gallery in Charlottown, P. E. I. *Gyula Marosán*, a painter, is also a native of Budapest (1915), and studied at the Academy of Fine Arts. He came to Canada after the 1956 Revolution. A folio of his drawings was published by the World Federation of Hungarian Freedom Fighters. He was well recognized among the leading abstract painters of Europe. *Imre Mosdossy*, a painter, a coin and stamp designer, was born in Budapest. From 1934 to 1942 he designed the *décor* for many Hungarian exhibitions, including the Hungarian Pavilion at the 1939 New York World's Fair. He was Senior Professor at the Academy of Fine Arts. Left Hungary in 1945 and came to Canada via Germany, France and Colombia in 1963. He did portraits of world leaders and interiors for churches. He designed more than 500 postage stamps for various countries, including Canada's five-cent stamp in 1968.

Amongst the other significant painters who had exhibited at illustrious art galleries are the Montreal-based *Eva Mosonyi* (1935), noted for her surrealist street scene paintings in Montreal, the Hamiltonian *Tibor Nyilasi* (1936), who taught applied anatomy in Hamilton, where his magnificent painting *Ecclesia* is held at the St. Stephen's Church. He did display work at the Expo pavilions and is represented at the Keresztény Múzeum in Esztergom and various galleries in Toronto and Hamilton. *Nori Péter* (1935) started to create clay Eskimo and Indian figures and painted Eskimo people. Nóra lives in Peterborough, Ontario and displayed across Ontario and Quebec. *Zoltán Rákos*, who came to Canada in 1929, is a painter of realistic and impressionistic styles, working in oil.

The Vancouver-based painter, novelist *Gabriel Szohner* (1936), known in the artistic world as "Ursus", has accomplished several hundred large canvases in oil and held exhibitions and one-man shows in Vancouver, Ottawa, Hamilton, and New York. As a result of a devastating fire a few years ago, most of his work had been destroyed. One of the talented Hungarian-Canadian artists residing in Victoria is the painter *Judit Fischer*, born in Budapest, came to Canada in 1968, and received her education at the Alberta College of Art in the visual arts. After a

ten-year stint in Calgary she moved with her family to Victoria in 1984. Exhibited her work in Calgary, Edmonton, Vancouver, Toronto, Beijing, Washington, D.C., and Victoria. In her paintings she projects forms and ideas which are beyond restricted, tangible reality. One of her symbolist paintings, entitled *Destiny*, had been selected by a jury of the International Symbolist Artists' Association as one of the best of 40 paintings from among 2000 pieces, and displayed on an exhibition on Internet. *Andrew Posa* (1938) is a sculptor, one of his large scale bronze sculptures is displayed at the Toronto Real Estate Board. The photographer *Gábor Szilasi* (1928) exhibited at Studio 23 in Montreal and at the Baldwin Street Gallery of Photography in Toronto. The late *Klári Kárpáti* was a chemist, but she gave up her profession and became an accomplished painter. In her work she searched to reflect the joy experienced while contemplating the Canadian landscape. She exhibited regularly between 1986 and 2001, the year she died. She is represented in the City of Ottawa's Collection, at the Art Gallery of Sherbrooke and many private collections. *Imre Székely* of Victoria is a graphic artist. His art adorns the walls of the Vatican, the House of Commons in Ottawa and private collections.

The sculptor *Elek Imrédy*, who had passed away some years ago in Vancouver, came to Canada in 1956. He had created a number of religious statues and busts for Roman Catholic schools and colleges in Edmonton and Vancouver. One of these was a 17-foot figure of *Christ the Teacher* for the Holy Redeemer College in Edmonton. He also carved in wood. Imrédy's *Little Mermaid* delights many a visitor to Stanley Park. The painter *Mihály Gergely* (1914–1999) attended the Academy of Fine Arts and the Vienna Academy of Fine Arts. After a promising beginning as a painter in his native land, he left Hungary in 1948 and came to Canada in 1949. He spent some decades in Alberta and continued his work as a painter. In recognition of his work he became an honorary citizen of Calgary. Later he moved to Nanaimo, B.C., and made several exhibitions in that city and elsewhere. His painting depicting the 1956 Revolution achieved world wide recognition (40,000 copies were printed and distributed throughout the world), as did some of his portraits.

Perhaps the most celebrated artist as sculptor, medalist, and coin designer, is *Dóra Pédery de Hunt* (1913). Born in Budapest, she was educated at the State Lyceum. Received an M.A. degree from the Royal School of Applied Art. She came to Canada in 1948 and settled in Toronto. She designed the Canada Council Medal, the Canada Centennial Medal (received 1<sup>st</sup> prize for design), and Expo 70. She designed the Canadian one and two dollar, as well as the one cent coins. Her first one-person show was held at the International Exhibitions of Contemporary Medals in The Hague, followed by others in Toronto, Athens, Paris, Prague, Vancouver, Ottawa, Cologne, Helsinki, and Budapest. She was appointed to the Canada Council for the 1970–1973 term. She edited the bilingual monograph, *Ten Contemporary Canadian Medalists / Dix médailleurs canadiens* (1971), which

includes the following Hungarian-Canadians: *Elek Imrédy*, *Hélène J. Maday*, *Julius Marosán*, *Dóra Pédery de Hunt*, and *Imre Szelényi*. She is a recipient of the Centennial Medal 1967, the Queen's Jubilee Silver Medal 1977, as well as the Officer of the Order of Canada, the Order of Ontario, and the Civic Award of Merit.

## 2. Music

Music is another field that Hungarian-Canadians excelled in. There have been a number of professional composers, educators, performers and coaches working across the country. *György Zadubán* refers to 56 professional musicians of Hungarian origin in Canada. The first distinguished Hungarian musician to have lived in this country was *Clara Lichtenstein* (1860–1946), who came to settle in Montreal in 1889. The violinist *Géza de Kresz* lived in Toronto between 1923 and 1935, and 1947 and 1959. The violinist *Jean de Rimanóczy* settled in Winnipeg in 1925, and the pianist *Paul de Marky* took up residence in Montreal in the late 1920s.

Following World War II, a number of Hungarian musicians arrived in Canada, including the cellist *George Horváth* (1948), as well as the composer-educator *István Anhalt* (1949). In the wake of the 1956 Revolution, a whole string of Hungarian performing groups and ensembles came into existence, including the Winnipeg-based Kapisztrán Folk Ensemble (founded by *Trudi Édenhoffer*, 1960), the Kodály Ensemble of Toronto (founded by *György Zadubán*, 1960), both groups comprising an orchestra, a mixed choir, and a dance group. The Vancouver Hungarian Choir was founded by *József Sallós* in 1967, and conducted by *Tamás Schadl*. The Ottawa Choir – founded by *Gábor Finta*, himself a composer, conducted by *Bea Finta* – is still flourishing today.

Canada has been a place much frequented by Hungarian musicians of world renown. Some of the visiting performers came to appear in this country were *Ernő von Dohnányi*, *József Szigeti*, *Béla Bartók*, *Zoltán Kodály* (the latter received an honorary doctorate degree from the University of Toronto in the mid-1960s), *György Czifra*, and *János Starker*. Some other notable and current musicians enriching Canadian and international music as conductors are *Miklós Takács*, *Árpád Joó*, and *János Sándor*. *Miklós Takács*, conductor of the Montreal Symphony Orchestra, and guest conductor of several Hungarian orchestras, as well as that of the Symphony Orchestra, the Paris Conservatoire, the Manhattan and the New England Symphony Orchestras and several Canadian orchestras. Graduated from Franz Liszt Academy of Music and the Sorbonne, at the latter specializing in conducting. He is a member of the Order of Canada and recipient of Pro Cultura Hungarica. *Árpád Joó* graduated from the Franz Liszt Academy of Music and the Juilliard School of Music, New York. He was conductor and director of the Calgary

Philharmonic Orchestra for several years. *János Sándor* also a graduate of the Franz Liszt Academy of Music, and a Permanent Guest Conductor of the Budapest State Opera, who is an Artist-in-Residence and Music Director of the UVIC Chorus and Orchestra and the Victoria Youth Orchestra.

The Reményi Ház had relocated from Budapest to Toronto and set up the Remenyi Award Competition in that city. The company was originally established at the Franz Liszt Academy of Music in 1904 and was suspended in 1950. The Kodály-principles of musical education were introduced to Canada in 1965 through the courses at the RCMT and at Montréal's Ecole Normale de Musique. *Gábor* and *Bea Finta* were invited by the Canadian government in the seventies to develop the Kodály-principles throughout Canada.

The student of Hungarian-Canadian music should consult some of the major reference works such as the *Encyclopedia of Music in Canada*, edited by Helmut Kallmann, Gilles Potvin and Kenneth Winters (1981). The 1076-page work offers individual entries on István Anhalt, Lóránd Fenyves, John Fodi, László Gáty, Éva Hidas-Hajós, Márta Hidy, Géza de Kresz, Tamás Légrády, Paul de Marky, Dezső Mahalek, Tibor Polgár, and Dezső Vághy. The entry, "Hungarian music in Canada" makes brief references to many other musicians, performers, educators, authors of Hungarian descent. The encyclopedia carries György Zadubán's essay (p. 439), in which he offers a summary of Hungarian contributions to music in Canada, as well as brief histories of the activities of performing groups, visiting musicians and musicologists. Helmut Kallmann's *Catalogue of Canadian Composers* (1952) makes reference to more than 50 Hungarian-born musicians. Kenneth Peacock has published *Twenty Ethnic Songs from Western Canada* (1966), and *A Survey of Ethnic Folk Music across Western Canada* (1963), which include Hungarian folksongs as well. George Demmer's essay "Van-e kanadai magyar népdal?" (Is There Such a Subject as Hungarian-Canadian Folksongs?) has appeared in the 2003 August-September issue of *Szigeti Magyarság*.

### 3. Composers

The eminent composer, *István Anhalt* was born in Budapest in 1919 and studied at the Royal Hungarian Academy of Music. He was Assistant conductor of the Hungarian National Orchestra. Came to Canada in 1949 and taught music at McGill University and at Queen University. His compositions include orchestra (*Interludium*, 1950, *Symphony*, 1958, *Symphony of Modules*, 1967), chamber (*Trio*, 1953, *Comments*, 1954, *Sonata*, 1954, *Foci*, 1969), piano and choir (*Three Songs of Love*, 1951, *Three Songs of Death*, 1954, *Cento Cantata Urbana*, 1967), etc. *Lóránd Fenyves*, born in Budapest in 1918, studied at the Franz Liszt Academy. He came to Canada in 1965 and taught music at the University of Toronto.

*John Fodi*, born in Nagytevel in 1944. In Canada he studied music in Hamilton and Toronto. He was founder of the Contemporary Music Group in Toronto and co-founder of the New Music Society in Montreal. His compositions include works for orchestra, chamber ensemble, and keyboard (*Symphony*, 1964–66, *Symparonekromena*, 1969–71, *Concerto for Viola* and *Two Wind Ensembles*, 1971–72, *Dragon Days*, 1976, *Variations III*, *Op. 52*, 1978, etc.)

Paul de Marky was born in Gyula, he studied music in Budapest. Moved to Canada in 1924. His compositions are *Piano Concerto in B major* (1948), *After a Farewell* (1949), *Amber Mountain* (1949), *Echo Island* (1949). *Tibor Polgár* (1907–1993). Born in Budapest, Polgár was conductor of the Budapest Radio Symphony Orchestra (1925–1950). In Canada he became conductor of the University of Toronto Symphony Orchestra and instructor of the U. of T. Opera Department. His compositions are *Kérők* (The Suitors, 1954), *A European Lover* (1965), *The Last Words of Louis Riel* (cantata, 1966–67), *The Troublemaker* (1968), *The Glove* (comic opera, 1977). He also composed the music to *In Praise of Older Women*, based on a novel by Stephen Vizinczey.

#### 4. Performers, educators

The pianist and teacher *Clara Lichtenstein* (1860–1946) was born in Budapest. She studied music at the Charlotte Square Institute in Edinburgh (later she became principal of that school), and continued her education at the Royal Academy of Music in Vienna. She moved to Montreal in 1899 and organized the Department of Music at the Royal Victoria College. Later she became Vice-Director of McGill Conservatorium. *Géza de Kresz*, violinist, educator, conductor, was born in Budapest in 1882, where he studied at the National Conservatory. Came to Canada in 1923, but soon returned to Europe and taught music in Vienna and Budapest. In 1947 he returned permanently to Toronto and taught at the Royal Conservatory of Music of Toronto until his death in 1954. His publications are: *Course in Violin Pedagogy* (1949), “Some Thoughts Concerning Violin Pedagogy” (1957) etc. *Tamás* (Theodore) *Légrády* was born in Budapest and graduated from the Bartók Conservatory. He came to Canada in 1956, taught solfège and orchestration at McGill University. Compositions are *Divertimento*, *Sunrise and Eclipse*.

The cellist *Dezső Mahalek* (1890–1961) came to Canada as a young man and studied music at McGill University. He moved to Winnipeg and taught music and played in the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra. Later relocated to Vancouver, where he was a Principal of the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra. *Jean de Rimanóczy* (1904–1958) was born in Vienna and educated in Budapest. In Canada he performed in symphony orchestras in Calgary and Vancouver. In 1947 he founded the Rimanóczy Quartet in Vancouver. Other notable performers included



are the violonists *Márta Hidy* and *Mária Sándor*. The latter graduated from the Győr Conservatory of Music. She is a member of the Victoria Philharmonic Orchestra. *Ilona Bartalus* and *Gábor Janota* are also of Victoria, and have taught music for three decades.

This summary, due to lack of space, is far from being exhaustive. Our intent is to bring the initiated reader's attention to two subjects in which a minority group of some 145,000 has made a significant difference to Hungarian, to Canadian and, to a certain extent, to world art and music.



# PRIVATSAMMLER IM „ÖFFENTLICHEN DIENST“

## MODERNE KUNST UND IHRE PATRONEN IM KOMMUNISTISCHEN UNGARN (1948–1988)\*

GÁBOR ÉBLI

Institut für Kunstgeschichte, Ungarische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Budapest  
Ungarn

Während von der staatlichen Ideologie verfeimt, moderne Kunst wurde unter dem kommunistischen Regime in Ungarn (1948–1988) von privaten Patronen gesammelt. Das Privateigentum von Kunstwerken wurde juristisch nicht untersagt, wenn auch informal benachteiligt. Mit der Liberalisierung des Systems, von den 1960ern an kamen mehr und mehr Ausstellungen von Privatsammlungen zustande. In der zeitgenössischen Avantgarde übernahmen ebenfalls private Mäzene die Rolle des Auftraggebers; diese Werke werden seit der Wende von den Museen gesucht.

**Schlüsselwörter:** Sammlungswesen, moderne ungarische Kunst, Museen, Kulturpolitik, Kunstmarkt, Avantgarde

Kunstsammeln ist eine der stärksten privaten Leidenschaften. Das Individuum drückt dadurch seine ästhetischen und moralischen Präferenzen aus, sucht soziales Prestige und finanziellen Gewinn zu erzielen, versucht die Sterblichkeit zu überwinden. In moderner Zeit ist es aber ebenso charakterhaft zur Aufgabe von öffentlichen Institutionen geworden. Museen tragen durch ihre Sammlungen zur nationalen Repräsentation, wissenschaftlichen Bearbeitung und zur visuellen und politischen Erziehung bei. Das Verhältnis privaten und öffentlichen Sammlertums ist dabei ein fruchtbares Spannungsfeld. Privatpatronen und Museen helfen und lernen voneinander, stehen nicht selten in Konkurrenz und werden auch vom Staat rechtlich, ökonomisch und ideologisch oft auf ganz unterschiedliche Weise behandelt.

Die vier Jahrzehnte des Kommunismus in Ungarn (1948–1988) bieten besonders im Bereich der modernen Kunst ein lehrreiches Beispiel zur Untersuchung dieses Verhältnisses. Privatsammler der Moderne erlitten vom Anfang dieser Pe-

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riode an zweifache Benachteiligung. Die Moderne wurde von den neuen Parteideologen als Überrest der vergangenen, „dekadenten“ bürgerlichen Kultur angesehen und in den Hintergrund verdrängt. Privateigentum galt als ebenso schadenvolles Erinnerungsstück des Kapitalismus. Moderne Kunst in privaten Sammlungen zu haben glich daher einer doppelten Schuld.

Obwohl nicht nur in Losungen, sondern auch administrativ untermauert, wurden diese Vorurteile vom Parteistaat in der Praxis jedoch nicht so scharf umgesetzt. Moderne Kunst und ihre Patronen wurden *nicht* systematisch verfolgt, extreme Aktionen wie jene gegen „Entartete Kunst“ im Dritten Reich 1937 fanden nicht statt. Auch juristisch wurde die Verstaatlichung von Privatsammlungen – die 1919 in der sowjetischen Räterepublik in Ungarn vier Monate lang vollzogen worden war – vermieden. Der rechtliche Rahmen für Privatsammlungen wurde zwar von 1949 an eingeeengt, aber beibehalten. Die tiefst totalitären Jahre von 1948–1956 brachten Enteignungen von Privatsammlungen, das waren aber Opfer der breiten diktatorischen Verfolgung, und keine bewussten kulturpolitischen Schritte.

### Der graue Markt

Nach der gescheiterten Revolution 1956 etablierte sich ein pragmatisches Regime, das schrittweise mehr Toleranz der Moderne als auch ihren privaten Patronen einräumte. Die vorher verschwiegene Avantgarde gelang zu sporadischen, kleinen Ausstellungen, der Kunstmarkt wurde zum Teil wieder zugelassen. Auktionen wurden staatlich monopolisiert, konnten jedoch öffentlich besucht werden. Große Sammler kauften auch vieles privat, zum Teil aus Einkommen, das ebenfalls im Zuge der Liberalisierung, durch die Zulassung gewisser privatwirtschaftlicher Aktivitäten erworben werden konnte. Eine Rechtsformel für private Galerien allerdings gab es bis zum Fall der Mauer nicht, doch der An- und Verkauf von Kunstwerken wurde Jahr zu Jahr offiziös mehr geduldet. Gewisse *avant-la-lettre* Kunsthändler betrieben einen teils sogar formalisierten Handel mit hochkarätigen Gemälden bereits in den 50er Jahren. Dénes Deák, dessen Sammlung heute in der Städtischen Galerie in Székesfehérvár (Stuhlweißenburg) öffentlich besucht werden kann, und viele andere lebten später stabil – profitabel und auf lange Sicht – vom Kunsthandel. Das Ringen zwischen den Privaten und dem Regime führte also zu einem informellen Prozess, in dem man den kommunistischen Anschein aufrechtzuerhalten und gleichermaßen zu umgehen suchte.

Das ändert zwar nichts daran, dass diese Jahrzehnte ungeheure Schäden dem Kunstverständnis und den Kunstbeständen des Landes zugefügt haben, doch lässt erblicken, wie komplex dieses System war. Das zeigt auch, wie schwer die Öffentlichkeit dieser Sphere aus heutiger Sicht zu definieren ist. Sofern „öffentlich“

mit „zugänglich“ gleichgesetzt wird, so waren die nach 1956 wieder zugelassenen Versteigerungen ein ganz wichtiger Schritt. Da ihre Auswahl von Werken aber nicht frei, sondern vom Staat – genauer gesagt vom Einparteistaat – limitiert blieb, war ihre Welt kein treuer Spiegel gesellschaftlicher Ansprüche und freien, privaten, individuellen Geschmacks, sondern einer repressiven politischen Macht.

Diese Widrigkeiten trieben viele Werke der ungarischen Moderne teils legal durch die staatliche Agentur *Artex*, teils illegal ins Ausland, wo sich ein paar Emigranten als Galeristen und Sammler für die Anerkennung dieser Werte engagiert haben – z. B. Paul Kövesdy in New York (dessen Sammlung vom *Museum moderner Kunst – Stiftung Ludwig* in Wien durch Mittel der György Soros Stiftung angekauft und dort zur Eröffnung des neuen Gebäudes 2001 ausgestellt worden ist) und Carl László in Basel (ein Teil dieser Sammlung wird 2006 in Veszprém in einem neuen Museum untergebracht und dieser Umbau zum Teil aus EU-Mitteln finanziert). Im Ausland gab es daher oft eine breitere Öffentlichkeit für die klassische ungarische Moderne als zu Hause. Die Öffentlichkeit der modernen Kunst war also nicht nur ideologisch, sondern auch geographisch geteilt, beschränkt.

Eine derart widerspruchsvolle Beziehung charakterisierte auch das spezifische Verhältnis zwischen Museen und Privatsammlungen. Prinzipiell wurde den Museen in allen Fragen der Vorrang gewährt. Ihre Sammlungen vermehrten sich quantitativ massenhaft, sie erhielten Befugnisse der Beaufsichtigung von Privatsammlungen, sie genossen Präferenzen in Versteigerungen und kontrollierten den grenzüberschreitenden Verkehr von Kunstwerken.

Dieses Übermaß an finanzieller und bürokratischer Macht bewirkte eine zügige Neuverteilung der Rollen im Kunstleben. Während vor dem Weltkrieg – wie in allen anderen abendländischen Ländern – die Förderung der bildenden Künste und die Aufbewahrung ihrer Schätze in einem gewissen Gleichgewicht zwischen Museen und Privatpatronen verteilt waren, fielen die Möglichkeiten und Zuständigkeiten jetzt überwiegend den Museen zu.

### **Unabhängigkeit von der ideologischen Kontrolle**

Unerwartet es auch klingen mag, gerade dies machte aber die wenigen und formal machtlosen Privatpatronen auf lange Sicht unverzichtbar. Zur übermäßigen Konzentration der Aufgaben bei den Museen gesellte sich nämlich auch ihre parteipolitische Kontrolle. Öffentliche Sammlungen und Ausstellungsorte mussten der staatlichen Ideologie folgen. Sie waren daher in ihrer Arbeit nicht nur quantitativ weit überfordert, sondern auch qualitativ stark eingeengt. Ihre neu errungene Macht hatte ebenso viele Nachteile wie scheinbare Vorteile. Sie verfügten zwar über nie zuvor erfahrene Mittel, waren aber durch die parteistaatliche Kontrolle

der Kultur gezwungen, diese im Dienste nicht professionell gewählter ästhetischer, sondern vorgegebener ideologischer Ziele zur Geltung zu bringen.

Das Gesellschaftliche des Öffentlichen wurde also vom Staatlichen dominiert. Diese Situation der Museen bekundet, wie viele verwandte, aber bei weitem nicht identische Bereiche des Öffentlichen in der Kultur gab. Privatsammler dagegen konnten relativ frei experimentieren, und zwar nicht nur innerhalb des Kanons, sondern auch über Kunstbereiche und Medien hinaus. Viele Sammler stellten ausgezeichnete Kollektionen der angewandten Künste zusammen und suchten Anknüpfungspunkte zur Volkskunst, während solch „interdisziplinäres“ Denken sich in den Museen erst langsam entfaltete bzw. bis heute fehlt.

Besonders die zentralen Orte der bildenden Künste – wie die 1957 gegründete Nationalgalerie und die 1871 gegründete Kunsthalle in Budapest – wurden zum Schaufenster des sozialistischen Realismus und der offiziell zugelassenen, gezähmten Moderne. Andere Wellen der Moderne wurden in den Ausstellungen und öffentlichen Sammlungen vernachlässigt. Sowohl die klassische Avantgarde wie auch ihre neuen Versionen nach 1945 existierten in einem Raum, der von diesen öffentlichen Institutionen nicht abgedeckt war.

Diese Werke zu sammeln, beziehungsweise die lebendigen Künstler der Neoavantgarde zu fördern, fielen als Aufgaben den privaten Patronen zu. Je radikaler gewisse künstlerische Positionen der klassischen als auch der neuen Avantgarde waren, desto weniger wurden sie in den Museen politisch geduldet oder gar ästhetisch richtig verstanden, und dementsprechend konzentrierten sie sich um Private herum. Neue Sammler aus der Intelligenz förderten verschiedene Bahnen der progressiven Kunst der 60er und 70er Jahre; andere – z. B. Nachkommen bürgerlicher Familien – spezialisierten sich auf die klassische Moderne.

Selbst links eingestellte Künstler der konstruktiven Avantgarde und ihre Werke aus den ersten Jahrzehnten des 20. Jahrhunderts fielen der öffentlichen bzw. staatlichen Vergessenheit zum Opfer. Ihr Vermächtnis wurde im politischen Leben verschwiegen, da sie wahrhafte linke Werte bekundet hatten, während der so genannte existierende Sozialismus diese immer nur proklamierte, aber nie praktizierte. Dies führte zum Paradox, dass die ästhetisch wertvollsten Werke links eingestellter Künstler in Privatsammlungen gelangten in einem Staat, der sich kommunistischer Lösungen bediente und privates Sammeln offiziell nur duldete.

Sogar Protagonisten vom Regime – besonders Diplomaten und führende Journalisten, die viel im Ausland verkehrten – engagierten sich privat für diese Werke, indem sie diese für ihre eigene Sammlung gekauft haben, während sie sich in offiziellen Aussagen gegen diese progressive Ästhetik geäußert haben. Ein treffendes Beispiel, die Sammlung Imre Patkó, kann heute in Győr (Raab) in einem eigens eingerichteten Museum besichtigt werden; die Sammlung Ernő Mihályfi wird von Zeit zu Zeit in Salgótarján ausgestellt. Diese führenden, allerdings stark gespaltenen Persönlichkeiten verkörperten den weitgehend akzeptierten „double langage“

der weichen Diktatur. Sie bewahrten ihre Identität durch dieses „geheime“ Sammeln und übernahmen dadurch die Aufgabe der öffentlichen Museen. Man hoffte vielleicht, dieser private Bereich würde einmal in die Öffentlichkeit überführt werden können – das ist jedoch eher selten und auch dann nur beschränkt möglich geworden.

### **Privatsammler und die Avantgarde**

Die öffentliche Benachteiligung der Moderne und besonders der Avantgarde bedingte also im Endeffekt eine verschärfte Teilnahme der Privatpatronen in der Aufbewahrung dieser kulturellen Werte. Aufgeklärte Apparatschiks hatten das schnell begriffen und begannen von den 60er Jahren, private Patronen nicht nur zu tolerieren, sondern auch zu unterstützen. Kunsthistoriker in wichtigen Positionen (Katalin Sinkó, László Mravik, István Solymár) haben das Sammlungswesen enorm animiert. Auch Museumsdirektoren leisteten einen gewissen Beistand. Ihnen wurde klar, dass der Ankauf von Werken vieler Künstler für die Museen politisch undurchsetzbar war, diese Werke aber in Privatsammlungen Schutz vor Zerstreuung finden könnten. Auf diese Weise kam es zur Zusammenarbeit von öffentlichen und privaten Sammlungen. Museologen machten Künstler und Sammler miteinander bekannt und assistierten zur marktmäßigen Akquisition von Werken, die sie unter anderen Umständen für ihre Museen erworben hätten. István Genthon, einer der bekanntesten Kunsthistoriker in der „bürgerlichen Tradition“ der Epoche, war Abteilungsleiter im Museum für bildende Kunst in Budapest und gleichzeitig Ratgeber vom großzügigen Sammler László Hidas. Béla Szíj, ein anderer ausgezeichnete Kunsthistoriker mit gutem Fingerspitzengefühl für privates Sammlertum, gestaltete die Ausstellung von Béla Kádár in der Nationalgalerie 1971 mit dem erfolgreichen Sammler Rudolf Bedő zusammen. 1985 war der Arzt, Sammler und Patron Péter Véghelyi der erste, der in Ungarn eine museumsfördernde Stiftung ins Leben rief.

In einzelnen Bereichen – wie vorzüglich in abstrakter Kunst – übernahmen Privatsammler dadurch zum Großteil eine der wichtigsten öffentlichen Verantwortungen, die Aufbewahrung vom nationalen Kulturerbe. Sie haben die Künstler der älteren Generationen oder ihre Witwen, Nachkommen aufgesucht und die Werke, Skizzen sowie andere Teile des Nachlasses, oft auch Briefe und Tagebücher, gekauft und dadurch vom Zerfall verschont. Sammler hielten ebenfalls die Tradition des Sammlertums aufrecht: Die Originalinventare einer der größten ungarischen Privatsammlungen der goldenen Epoche am Anfang des 20. Jahrhunderts, der Sammlung Baron Adolf Kohner (versteigert zumeist an ausländische Käufer in Budapest 1934), wurden z. B. bei einem ambiziösen Sammler unter dem Kommunismus erhalten. Dies galt auch für Dokumente von Künstlern, die lange im Aus-

land gelebt hatten oder aus anderen Gründen durch das kommunistische Regime verfeimt wurden.

Ohne Privatpatronen wäre dieses Erbe weder identifiziert noch erhalten worden. Sammler wurden auf diese Weise zu Ersatz-Kunsthistorikern. Sie initiierten und betrieben nicht nur das Sammeln fassbarer Werte, sondern auch jene Recherchen, die von den Museen, Universitäten, Forschungszentren, Ministerien, Archiven und Bibliotheken hätten organisiert werden sollen. Iván Dévényi hielt zum Beispiel regen Briefwechsel mit ungarischen Künstlern in Emigration auf und schrieb mehrere fachliche Monographien.

In der zeitgenössischen Kunst enthüllten sich diese Bestrebungen als Förderung der neuen Avantgarde und weiterer Stilrichtungen – von religiös geprägter bis zur naiven Kunst –, die offiziell keine Anerkennung fanden. Für die Künstler der Europäischen Schule (gegründet 1945, verstummt nach 1948) und der sich an westlichen Richtungen orientierenden Neoavantgarde der 60er und 70er Jahre bedeutete der Beistand einiger Sammler sowohl moralische als auch finanzielle Unterstützung. Sammler halfen mit Kritik und fachlichem Rat. In diesem Segment sicherte also der hinter den Kulissen operierende private Kunstmarkt die Kontinuität jener Moderne, die das Regime durch Kitsch, Ideologiekunst oder falsche, getrogene moderne Stile zu ersetzen suchte. Das Beharren der nicht mehr als ein paar dutzend Sammler während dieser Periode war unentbehrlich überhaupt zum Zustandekommen vieler heute ikonisch hoch geachteter Werke der Avantgarde. Ohne diesen Hintergrund wären manche dieser Gemälde, Skulpturen oder konzeptueller Stücke gar nicht erst gefertigt worden.

### Sammler und ihre Öffentlichkeit

Eine Reihe von Privatpatronen lebte auch praktisch vom informalen Handel mit Kunstwerken. Was ihnen Gewinn und Spaß brachte, führte zur Vermehrung der Kunstliebhaber, zum Weitersickern der Informationen über verschwiegene Künstler. Sie mobilisierten dadurch nicht nur die Kunst, sondern auch jene Zivilgesellschaft, die – weil politisch unkontrollierbar – das Regime ausrotten wollte. Finanzielles Interesse und Leidenschaft für Kunst stellten also die Weichen dazu, dass sich das intellektuelle Leben des Landes nicht gleichschalten ließ. Privater Gewinn und private Selbstverwirklichung spielten die Rolle des Motors jenes öffentlichen Lebens, in dem das Öffentliche sich deutlich vom Staatlichen unterschied und sich wahrhaft am Gesellschaftlichen orientierte.

Diese Proto-Galeristen gründeten auch die erste neue Fachzeitschrift für Sammlertum dieser Epoche in Ungarn (*A műgyűjtő*, Der Sammler – initiiert vom Sammler Dezső Kovács), die mit finanziellem Zuschuss vom vorher erwähnten monopolisierten Auktionshaus BÁV in den 70er Jahren die Öffentlichkeit dieser



sonst ziemlich geschlossenen Welt erweiterte. Mehrere Privatsammler hielten Salons in ihren Wohnungen, die zwar der Polizei eine Möglichkeit boten, sie durch Agenten zu kontrollieren, jedoch nie von den Obrigkeiten gestoppt wurden und dadurch zu wichtigen intellektuellen Kreisen wuchsen. Auch der heutige Direktor der Nationalgalerie besuchte einen von diesen bereits vor dreißig Jahren. Andere Sammler leiteten spezifische Sammlerkreise, z. B. für Graphik und Skulptur – zwei Bereiche, die in öffentlichen Museen sonst nur geringe Achtung erweckt haben.

Privatsammlungen erhielten von Zeit zu Zeit eine noch größere Bekanntheit: durch temporäre Ausstellungen. Die Nationalgalerie veranstaltete 1963 und 1981 bedeutende Ausstellungen moderner ungarischer Kunst aus Privatsammlungen. Die Eröffnungsreden und Kataloge beteuerten den offiziellen Standpunkt der neutralen Unterstützung von Privatsammlern. Der Staat – durch sein Kultusministerium und, unter dessen Aufsicht, durch das wichtigste Museum ungarischer Kunst – ermunterte also die Privaten zur Förderung der öffentlich wichtigen modernen Kulturgüter, ohne sich dabei aktiv zu engagieren.

Museen in Provinzstädten waren in einer noch günstigeren Lage, da sie nur unmittelbar der zentralen politischen Überwachung ausgesetzt operierten. Kulturell aktive Städte wie Székesfehérvár, Esztergom (Gran) und andere luden Sammlungen auch individuell ein, es wurden Kataloge veröffentlicht. Kunsthistoriker und Kulturfunktionäre hohen Ranges, oft Museumsdirektoren aus Budapest hielten die Eröffnungsreden, und das schenkte Anerkennung den privaten Patronen. Das Private gewann daher an Belang durch den Beistand des Öffentlichen, aber nur am Rande der Öffentlichkeit. Pécs (Fünfkirchen) fand die finanziellen und politischen Mittel, mehrere Privatsammlungen auch zu erwerben. Das dortige Museum verfügte bereits in den 60er, 70er Jahren über erstrangige Kunstwerke und genoss den Ruhm einer beneidenswerten Unabhängigkeit vom Parteistaat. Der Erwerb von Privatsammlungen durch Museen erntete dadurch finanziellen und moralischen Gewinn für die Sammler, aber ebenso Vorteile für das Museum, das sonst diese Werke nicht hätte kaufen können. Andere Sammler haben den eigenen Weg zur Öffentlichkeit gefunden, und ihre Werke sind heute in halbwegs privaten Museen zugänglich: Die Sammlung László Vass kann in Veszprém, die von Ákos Vörösváry in Diszel bei Tapolca besichtigt werden.

Diese Zusammenarbeit öffentlicher und privater Sammlungen unter ungünstigen Bedingungen beweist die Gültigkeit der Beobachtung, dass Museen und Privatpatronen aneinander angewiesen sind und dass sie unter den verschiedensten Konditionen Wege zueinander finden. Das Öffentliche und das Private werden voneinander definiert. Die Jahrzehnte des Kommunismus haben viele Schäden dem Sammlungswesen zugefügt, es aber nicht vernichtet. Seit Anfang der 80er Jahre gedeiht privates Sammeln erneut ungehindert.

## Ausstellungen und Kataloge ausgewählter ungarischer Privatsammlungen seit 1945

Über private Sammlungen und ihre Zusammenarbeit mit Museen in Ungarn ist bisher wenig in Fremdsprachen veröffentlicht worden. Kataloge solcher Sammlungen – wenn oft auch nur mit ungarischem Text – sind durch die Reproduktionen der Kunstwerke allerdings auch für den ausländischen Leser sehr nützlich. Die meisten der hier angeführten Publikationen können in den Bibliotheken ungarischer Museen gefunden werden.

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